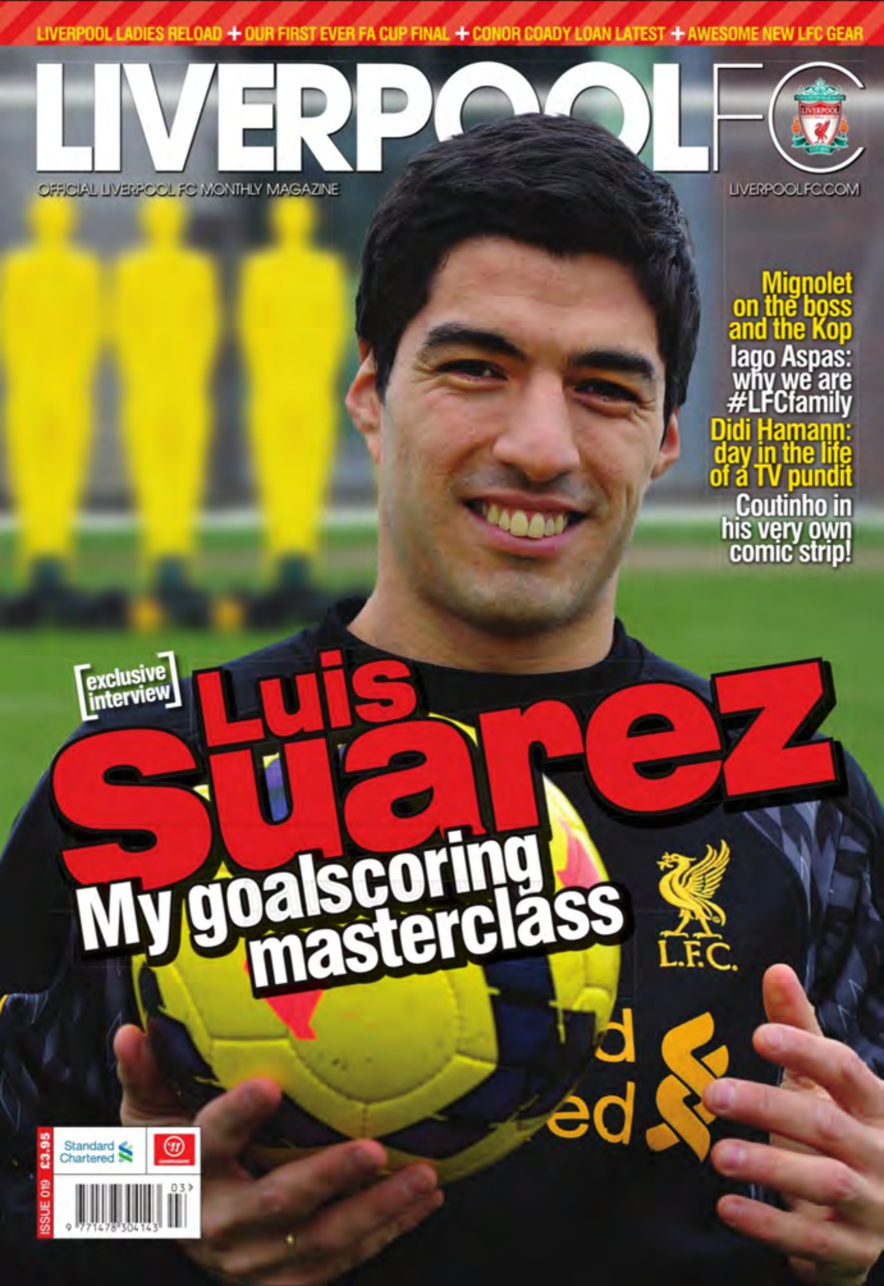
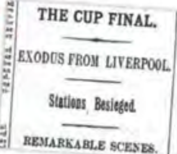


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Issue 19 March 2014



LIVERPOOL FC MONTHLY

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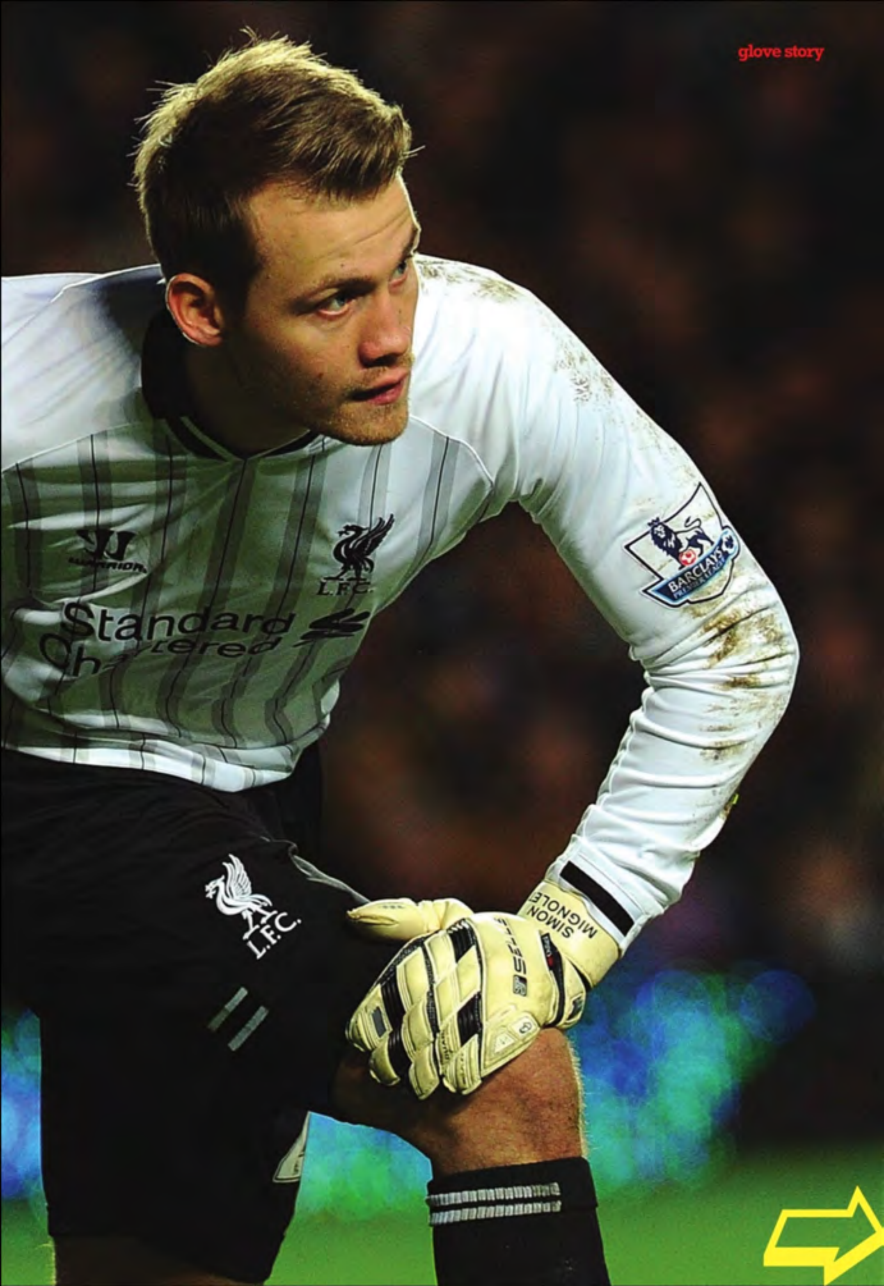
Captain Steven Gerrard is mobbed by jubilant team-mates after his near-post header gives Liverpool the lead in the derby. Further goals from Daniel Sturridge (2) and Luis Suarez secured the club's biggest win over Everton since 1982, and their biggest in the fixture at Anfield since 1972.





How to be a LIVERPOOL GOALKEEPER

by Simon Mignolet


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SIMON MIGNOLET

"As a visiting goalkeeper I was clapped by the Kop – no one else does that"

Love the Kop

I'd played at Anfield as a Sunderland player and noticed that the Kop loved their goalies – not only their home goalie but also goalkeepers from the opposition. I received a clap when I played in front of the Kop and that was a special feeling because there is no other club in the world that does that. Now I'm here, I know that the fans are right behind me. That can only help when you are playing home games.

I had the chance to play in Stevie's testimonial before the start of the season so that gave me the opportunity to know what it was like to play at Anfield as a Liverpool keeper and so it wasn't completely new when that Stoke game came along. When you make your debut you have to show the fans that you are ready for the job and that you can cope with all the things that are asked of you as the Liverpool goalie. That takes a bit of time. We're only halfway through the season now but you get used to it.

Make the right start

I was lucky to join the club early in the summer. There are a lot of players who eventually end up being signed at the very end of the transfer window, which makes it harder to join the team and get used to their preparations. It also means you don't get much time before the first game comes along. I had six or seven weeks together with the whole team to get to know the lads, especially the coaching staff, and in that time I was able to adapt to my new environment. It also gave me time to play a few friendlies and understand what the coach asked of me and get used to that. I had that period to adjust so I was quite well into it by the time the Premier League season kicked off. You always hope for a good start whenever you join a new club and with making that penalty save on the opening day against Stoke City, I was able to do that. Keeping three consecutive clean sheets at the start of the season also boosted my confidence.

As told to William Hughes



In unison with Martin Skrtel in defence

Make yourself heard

My missus always says to me after games that I'm the only one she can hear! She says that I'm always shouting to my defenders. I reply that it's part of my job, but then she says: 'Yes, well I don't hear any other goalies doing it as loud as you!' I think that can only be a good thing. It's important that I try and give as much information to my colleagues in the first instance. If problems can be dealt with before they arrive, it's always better than trying to address things later. I try to communicate that and the gaffer and the goalie coach are always keen for me to do that as well.

The fact that I speak French helps when Mamadou, Kolo or Aly are in the team. When I arrived in this country I already spoke English so I didn't have too many problems in adapting to the language. You see a lot of foreign players arriving in a new country and they not only have to settle to the style of the culture but also to the language so that was an advantage.

It's also good to have open communication with the staff. Brendan Rodgers is a gaffer who gives you confidence. He speaks openly to you and I always like that in a manager – if you can speak to him and ask him things, it helps. I am very pleased we have those channels of communication and I look forward to learning a lot more from him in the times ahead.

Research your game

Football has evolved these days. After a game we will


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> **"Most of what you learn as a keeper are things that you don't see on MOTD"**

analyse all the things I have done during a match as well as things that I haven't done. There are many things to look for and we work hard in training to make sure we implement the aspects we pick up on in order to make progress and improve.

I've always embraced video analysis. When I arrived at the club, goalkeeping coach John Achterberg mentioned that he'd used it with the other keepers and it's an area where you can learn a lot, not only by watching yourself but also by looking at other goalies.

Most of the things that we learn are things that you won't see on *Match of the Day* or Sky Sports News. They are often details you will only notice yourself – things that nobody talks about after the game and which most people won't think are very important. As a goalkeeper, there may be only five or six instances in a game where you will actually save a shot or sometimes even touch the ball. But there are a lot of things you can learn from studying the DVDs.

For example you can always examine your positioning. You can look to see how you were preparing for a cross. It may be that the cross didn't even come into the box but you can still have a look at your position and make sure you were in the right spot. After a game we will always have 10 or 11 minutes of footage to look at. That's actually quite a lot when you think a match lasts 90 to 95 minutes and you may only touch the ball a few times.

Thrive on pressure

There is going to be pressure at any club. That's normal in football with all the media around it and everybody watching you. There are not many players who can play for Liverpool Football Club and when you are talking about goalkeepers there are even fewer. At the moment there is only me, Jonesey and Wardy (Danny Ward) have the chance to do that. It is up to you to make sure that you do your best. If you give 100 per cent every single day, you can't blame yourself.

Enjoy it

People who have watched Liverpool over the past couple of seasons will know that Brendan Rodgers likes to build the play from the back. That's a different story to when I was at Sunderland. On the other hand, with Belgium we also start from the back. In the Belgian and Dutch schools it is a method that is very important in the education of young players. I enjoy it. As I have said, the fact I arrived before pre-season started gave me the chance to familiarise myself with it.

Concentrate

For me, it is no different if you're busy as a goalkeeper or if you only have to make one catch during a game. At Sunderland I was often kept busy, but while we have played more of this season's games in the opposition's half, especially at home, I have still needed to make a lot of saves. So it doesn't make any difference. Concentration is an important attribute but not only for me, for every position throughout the team. You have to be focused on doing your job for those 90 to 95 minutes every Saturday afternoon and also every day in training. When you do that day in, day out, it becomes a habit. I always step out onto the pitch knowing that I have to be concentrated to do my very best, and as long as I do that, in the end I can't blame myself.

Push each other

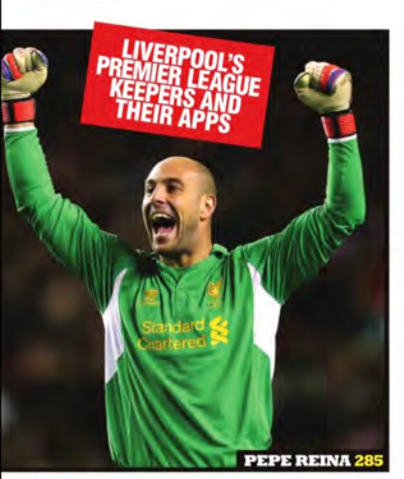
All the goalkeepers work as a team and we all train really hard. Jonesey and Wardy are are always in the gym after training, trying to give 100 per cent. In my experience, that is something that goalkeepers have always done. We have a very good relationship. If everybody pushes each other we can only become better with it. That's how it goes when there's competition in the dressing-room.

Feel comfortable

It's important to feel at home. Coming to Liverpool was a bit different to when I arrived at Sunderland. Back then I was coming from the Continent. I had never lived on my own before and there were a lot of things to be settled – everything was pretty new for me. In contrast when I arrived at Liverpool I was already used to England and although I hadn't yet played for such a big club by that stage I knew what Liverpool Football Club was and what it meant.

CLUB AND COUNTRY

The relationship with the national coach is very different because here we have a manager whereas on the continent it is more a coach. Plus there is the fact that with the national team, you only see the coach for the games so you are not working with him every day. Also as a goalkeeper you tend to work more with the goalkeeping coach. You have a special relationship with him. I have just started working with a new one with Belgium. Erwin Lemmens has recently started in the role and he is also goalkeeping coach at Lokeren, a club currently in the Belgian first division.



PEPE REINA 285



DAVID JAMES 214


JERZY DUDEK 127


SANDER WESTERVELD 75


BRUCE GROBBELAAR 34


CHRIS KIRKLAND 25


BRAD FRIEDEL 25



MIKE HOOPER 9

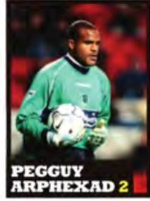

BRAD JONES 8


SCOTT CARSON 4


ALEXANDER DONI 4



PAUL JONES 2


PEGGUY ARPHEXAD 2


PATRICE LUZI 1


DANIELE PADELLI 1


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ANALYSE THIS

Ex Reds working in the media? To be fair to Jose there are quite a few – enough for a pretty decent LFC XI in fact

I made the switch from football pitch to TV studio last year and now form an unlikely double-act with Gary Neville for Sky Sports. I recently joked that if I'd known Liverpool would've been so strong this season I would've postponed my retirement!

Since my retirement from playing in June 2005 I've carved out a niche as a respected studio analyst for Sky Sports

Time and time again I've sat here and said that if you want to be at the top of your game as a pundit for two decades on Saturday night's *Match of the Day* you've got to show grit and determination and character. But I'm retiring after this summer's World Cup and I'll miss all that diabolical defending



After I quit playing I started appearing on *Match of the Day* and *MOTD2* and the punters seem to appreciate my articulate insight



The gloves are off and I'm now a regular fixture on BT Sport's Premier League output offering analysis on the fine art of goalkeeping

Me and Jocky took our partnership from LFC's central defence to MOTD's studio and I'm also a pundit on BBC 5 Live – commentator Alan Green loves it when I give him some stick!

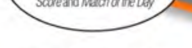


I'm a goal-poacher turned co-commentator in my debut season in the BT Sport and ITV commentary box



Some people think I stick up for the Reds but I just tell it like it is. I do Sky's Premier League and Champions League coverage and when I joined Carra and the injured Stevie G for LFC's 5-0 win at Spurs I was introduced as 'the former Tottenham midfielder'!

I used to work for ESPN and now it's BT Sport. I still show off my silky skills on the channel's 'mock-up' pitch in their studio



When I'm not been helping to mentor strikers at the LFC Academy I make occasional appearances on the BBC's *Final Score* and *Match of the Day*

Me – biased?! I'm part of the Sky Sports *Soccer Saturday* crew working alongside Jeff Stelling and providing live opinion on the Prem and Football League programme on Saturday afternoons

NOT FORGETTING...

Steve Nicol does analysis on the British game for ESPN in America. Meanwhile Michael Robinson, or 'Robin' as he is known in Spain, successfully refined a magazine show concept for Spanish TV looking at all aspect of La Liga, entitled *El Dia Despues* (The Day After)

Stan Collymore has been a presenter and co-commentator on radio station talkSPORT since 2008

Jim Beglin has been a co-commentator on ITV's football programming for several seasons. He's also known as one half of the commentary duo - alongside Jon Champion - on the popular video game *Pro Evolution Soccer*

No point being a TV pundit if you don't speak your mind

Didi HAMANN



Matchday. I arrive for work around lunchtime. Rather than just one game, I have three to focus on. This is the life of a pundit.

On 11 January I was working on that night's *Match of the Day* on BBC1. It meant getting to the studio in time to watch the first fixture, Swansea's 12.45pm kick-off against Manchester City. Then it was Chelsea's trip to Southampton at 3pm and finally Man United against Spurs in the evening.

By the time we'd finished analysing clips, selecting the incidents to discuss on the show and then recorded everything it was nearly midnight. It was a long day but one that I enjoyed.

As a player I'd never given much thought to being a pundit. It was only towards the end of my career that it became an option. I've done my coaching badges and would like to one day be a manager again, but at the moment I'm really happy working on the box, with both the Beeb and closer to home the excellent LFC TV.

Initially it takes some getting used to. I wouldn't say I was ever nervous – I'd had a camera pointing at me for the best part of 20 years, particularly if I was playing at a big international tournament or in a cup final. It was being in the studio that was all-new and took me a little time to adjust to.

One of the first TV channels I worked for was RTE in Ireland. When I started there I was shocked by the heated arguments that pundits like Johnny Giles, Eamon Dunphy and Liam Brady regularly had. They are outstanding and provide the kind of punditry I'd want to see if I was watching at home.

Working with them taught me that you should make your point and stick to what you believe to be true. You shouldn't just say what you think people want to hear and if you disagree with someone else it should be debated. That is the main reason why you are all there. If you don't want to put your opinions across you shouldn't be in the studio. Viewers want to hear something different from people who have played the game.

"Make your point and stick to it"

Inevitably there will be times when you have to comment on former colleagues. I don't have a problem with that. Again, if you do you shouldn't be on TV or the radio. Whenever I have to criticise someone I played with it's nothing personal, I'm doing my job. Most players will accept that. I always did. Besides, the top players will know and usually admit if they've performed poorly or made a mistake. I think that's part of what makes them so good.

Some people say a greater number of ex-players are choosing punditry over management because it's an easier job. I'm not sure that's the case. I just think the media has grown to such an extent that more people are getting opportunities and taking them. I'm glad the chance came my way.

Follow Didi on Twitter @dietmarhamann



"the goal the ball and me that's all i focus on"

What goes through the mind of Luis Suarez just before a set-piece? Simon Hughes finds out





On target v Norwich again

I walk away from the training pitch and I see the goal. I see the ball. I see two, three, four balls. I walk back onto the pitch and ask the nearest goalkeeper to help. I put each ball at a different distance and angle. Then I think. I think about the different gaps: if it should be high, low – fast, a bit slow. That's how it happens…

You are inside the mind of Luis Suarez moments before he takes a free-kick. This is the mind of a player many consider to be in league with the greatest footballers. The mind, however, is a place few are capable of interpreting. Perhaps it is a chance to understand, if only a little. A personal audience with the Uruguayan is a rare experience for any journalist. He enters a Melwood anteroom, directly from a training session. His jet-black hair remains still. It never seems to move. Yet a jewel of sweat trickles down the side of his temple. Another one follows. The smell of football pervades. There is an impression that his brilliance is a consequence of nature. It was always going to happen. He was born this way. Yet a brilliant mind and a brilliant capability for executing football skill goes only some of the way to making a world-class centre-forward.

It's easier for me when I approach the ball from the left side, hitting towards the goalkeeper's right. People ask me whether the most important thing is balance, power or accuracy. But I would say concentration, definitely. You have to kick like nothing [else] matters. The kick [means] something important. It needs attention…

Suarez is that player because of ability. Suarez is that player because of attitude. There is the inner rage that all the greats speak of – the rage that some outsiders view as a flaw. Yet most significantly, it is the effort – the relentless drive; the extra physical and technical work; to become better, to win. When asked how it feels to score a goal, wheeling away towards the crowd in celebration, he thinks of only one thing. "I want to do it again…" Then a pause… "quickly."

> **"Whatever ability you have, you can find a way – there shouldn't be an excuse"**

Suarez cannot say why the desire inside pushes him further than others. Uruguayans are this way, supposedly, because of the country's geographical location, wedged uncomfortably between two South American heavyweights, Brazil and Argentina. It has always had to stand up for itself.

Footballers share similar characteristics. They are highly skilled and determined but not to be crossed. Commentators who know the region say that history reveals, both in sporting and social terms, they sometimes don't even need to be crossed.

Suarez smiles at that particular suggestion, easing back on his reclining seat to consider. Then he leans forward, like he always does to interact, when listening or speaking. "Maybe…" He uses his hands to explain and illustrate his thoughts and recollections. Eye contact is continuous. His manner makes the conversation lively, intense even. There are full answers in English and firm handshakes at the beginning and end. It is an enjoyable interview, mainly because he appears interested in the questions being asked and does not act like he'd rather be somewhere else.

Suarez's description of his childhood hero is almost emotional, certainly passionate. Growing up in the northern outskirts of Montevideo, he watched videos of Gabriel Batistuta, the Argentine centre-forward. Batistuta was the player Suarez wanted to become. "He [was] the perfect number nine," he says emphatically, in a way that makes it pointless mentioning any other contenders. "In the box, outside the box – there was always a threat. He could score from any distance, free-kicks. Watching him taught me you had to be alive [all of the time] to be dangerous."

On YouTube there is a clip which presents Batistuta's best goals. Most of them were for Fiorentina. No type of finish was beyond him. There are screamers, toe-pokes, thunderous volleys and deft chips. Batistuta was like a cyclone – an unstoppable force of nature. From one cross, he thuds in a header against

Anatomy of a free-kick



1 Fifty minutes on the clock v Hull City at Anfield and Luis has been upended by James Chester





2 He lines up the free-kick at the Kop end and positions himself at right angles to the dead ball



3 Keeping his eyes firmly fixed on the ball he takes five steps in his approach before contact



4 He strikes the ball with his right instep as Martin Skrtel and Iago Aspas break from the wall



5 City striker Yannick Sagbo makes a forlorn attempt to block the bending shot from its trajectory



6 By now keeper Allan McGregor has begun the desperate dive to the other side of his goal



7 Even at full stretch the shot is way beyond his reach and heading for the top near-post corner



8 And Luis celebrates scoring in his seventh consecutive Anfield fixture



Sampdoria 18 yards out, similar to Suarez's improbable effort for Liverpool against West Bromwich Albion earlier this season.

Then, after a Rui Costa pass against Vicenza, Batistuta somehow propels the ball over his head using a back-heel flick before running onto his own assist to side-foot calmly past the advancing goalkeeper. Again, there are parallels with Suarez's equaliser at Anfield when Newcastle were visitors, controlling a 50-yard delivery from deep using his shoulder to eliminate any chance Fabricio Coloccini and Tim Krul had of stopping him.

Suarez and Batistuta are different players. Batistuta was over six feet tall, Suarez is just under. Batistuta was powerfully built, Suarez in person is not as stocky as you might assume. Yet attacking moves involving either reliably meet the same end. "Whatever ability you have, you can find a way," Suarez says. "There should not be an excuse." It is this aptitude for improvisation that sets the players apart from those aspiring to be the same.

I take my time. I see the goalkeeper's positioning. I look at the ball. I take two steps, maybe three steps back; it depends on the distance. Then I go…

When Suarez meets a free-kick, his right arm is positioned wide, straight and lower than the left, which is angled towards the sky. His upper body is shaped like an aeroplane turning a corner. The left leg impossibly slanted, almost like he's about to fall over. Then the right leg whips round the ball as a boxer does when delivering an uppercut. Technically, there is symmetry. The process is only mastered through repetition. There is nothing more to it than that.

Suarez started practising free-kicks during his time at Ajax. "I saw it as

"Stevie takes the penalties but if he didn't want to, I would – anything to score!"

another opportunity to score a goal," he says. "As a striker, you have to take all opportunities. I have missed two penalties here [at Liverpool] but if Stevie [Gerrard] decided he did not want to take them or was not there, I would give my name. Any chance [to score]."

Nutmegs came before the free-kicks. He believed understanding the art would lead to more goals. After moving to Europe, he realised opponents were bulkier and more physical. Suarez admits he is not particularly fast. He had to find another way to get round them, or – as it transpires – warp through them. "I did not do this until I became a professional. No, no, no – never as a child. At Groningen I saw an opportunity to reach the goal by going straight through defenders (nutmegging). I knew that no defender likes this. So I started doing it in training. Each time, you get a little more confidence, you improve and so you repeat it.

"On the pitch you have one second, a minimal second. There is no time to think. If you have the ball and you see the defender has opened his legs, you



Curling home an exquisite free-kick at Goodison Park last November


GERRARD
8
FLANAGAN
38
7

have to try. Sometimes, you also try just because you like [the challenge].

"Of course, if you practice – not just the free-kicks, the nutmegs – but if you shoot with the left, you shoot with the right, you practice with your head; you stay on the training field, you become better. That is what I love about being a professional the most, the opportunity to do this. I always tell young players this is so important because when I was younger, it was not always there."

Suarez really emphasises the importance of Ajax, where he eventually became club captain. "Ajax was perfect. For a young player to develop, everything is there. You train, you listen, you want to do more. If you have the ability, there is no excuse not to progress."

Maybe the goalkeeper sometimes knows where you are going to shoot. He can study. But with confidence, I know the chances of scoring are better. Sometimes, the goalkeeper does not matter…

There is a feeling that Suarez is one of those supremely confident footballers, one that is surely made of Teflon. He makes the point, though, that only through repetition the confidence to improvise arrives. "Without confidence, a player is not the same," he recognises.

For free-kicks, he chooses to remain behind after two or three training sessions a week. "It is not hours," he explains. "I will stay for an extra 20 or 30 minutes. Any more is too much because you think too much. You



The strike v Hull City from a different angle

"I'll practise for an extra 30 minutes but not too much because you can overthink"

have to trust yourself. Maybe that is experience. If you continue training in this way, it gets better. This is the same for anything. You don't have a very good left foot? You train a bit more."

Suarez hopes to improve. Despite mentioning the left foot again, it is not just in one specific area. "When you reach one level, there is always another level. No player is complete. You can't be happy and relax. That's why we are professional."

Suarez speaks about the frustration he has with himself. During his extended pre-season due to suspension, he had more time. It was spent trying to grasp other techniques. He placed the ball with the valve facing him and approached it like Cristiano Ronaldo, legs wide open initially, striking full-on with his instep. Suarez reveals that he is, indeed, human. "I did it again and again. Every day, I would try; really, really hard. But…" He delays for comedy value… "I can't!"

He recalls a game against Norwich City at Anfield in December. Describing the first 15 minutes, he winces, making a noise, which reflects displeasure. "The pass came, it bounced away. I tried to pass, it went to a Norwich player. It was terrible." Within 35 minutes he'd scored a hat-trick. At the final whistle he'd scored four of Liverpool's five.

At the time his facial expression for the third – a hypnotic flick then a low-rising drive that would probably still be travelling now had a net not been in place – was different to any before or afterwards. There was giddiness, an awkward smile. He seemed almost surprised. "I could not believe this. But I think when the striker is on fire, it's a lucky day. I could have tried shooting 20 more times on another day and I don't score. You have to keep trying. That's what I did. Quickly it can all change."

Suarez's fourth goal was one of those free-kicks, honed at Melwood. It was his 11th strike in three years against the East Anglians. At the time of writing, Suarez had scored 23 goals in 18 games for Liverpool this season. Overall his record stood at 74 in 116. I put it to him that if he remained at Liverpool for the rest of his career, he would be regarded as the club's greatest player. Supporters – general observers – have argued that he is presently the third-best player on the planet, behind the aforementioned Ronaldo and Lionel Messi at the top in no particular order. There is a modest response.

"I really don't know," he says. "I like this for the confidence only. But if I am told the TV, the internet or the newspaper think this, I don't listen. It does not stay in my head. I am only concentrating. Thinking ahead, I only want to improve. I am 27. I want to get better and I want the team to get better. This is not my dream, to be the best player in the world. I just want to win."

In the stadium, I am not nervous. I know the crowd is watching me. But I like the pressure. I forget they are there. I am focusing only on the ball and myself. This is what I've trained for…

SUAREZ FREE-KICKS: EIGHT ON A PLATE

26 AUG 2012 MAN CITY (H) 2-2
His low free-kick beats the wall and nestles inside Joe Hart's left-hand post to put the Reds back in front.

4 OCT 2012 UDINESE (H) 2-3
Curls a stunning effort into the top corner to set up a frantic finish in the Europa League group game.

21 FEB 2013 ZENIT SP (H) 3-1
With the Reds one down, Agger is fouled on the edge of the box and Suarez drills through the wall.

21 FEB 2013 ZENIT SP (H) 3-1
Rifles home another unstoppable free-kick just before the hour from a central position 25 yards out.

2 MARCH 2013 WIGAN (A) 4-0
Luis slips running up to strike the ball, but his deflected effort still finds its way into the net.

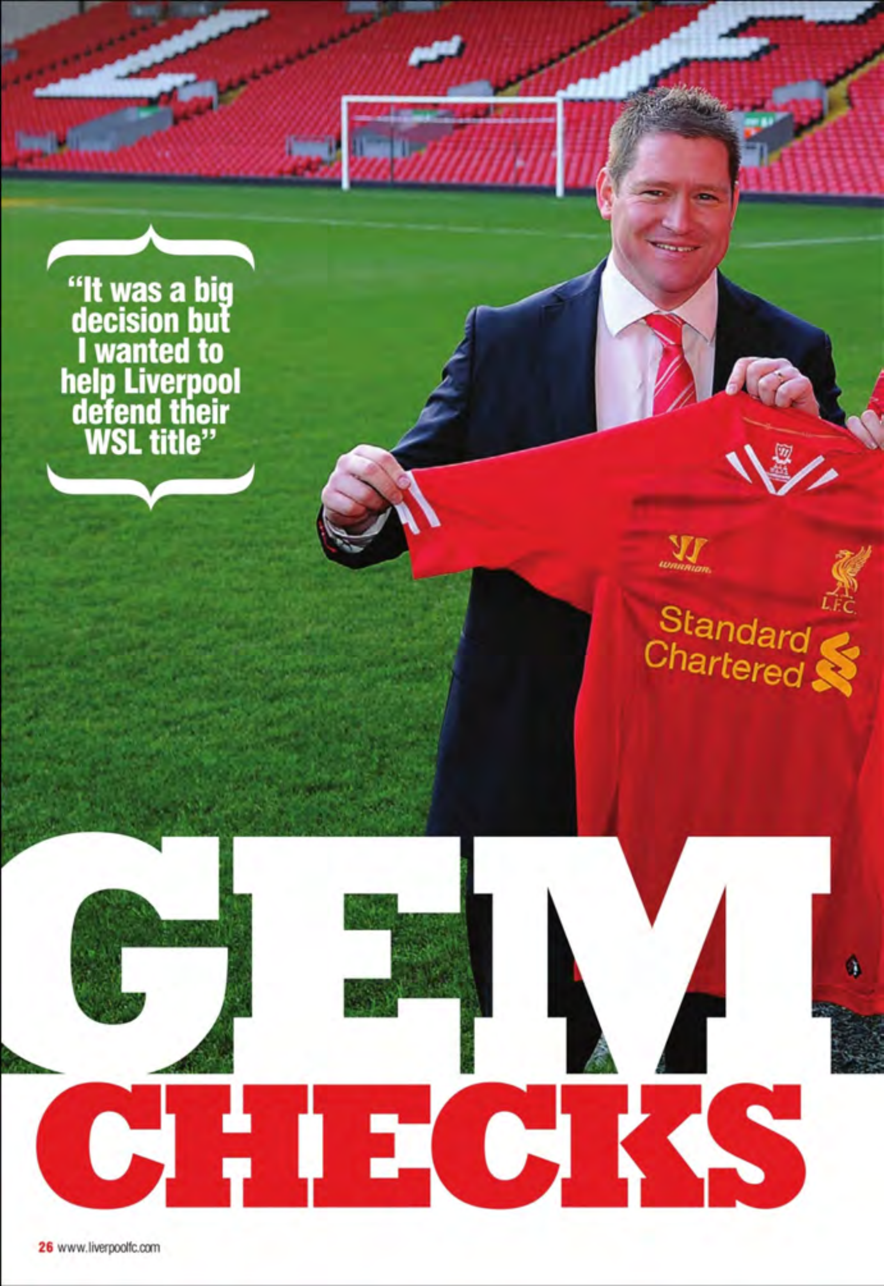
23 NOV 2013 EVERTON (A) 3-3
Puts the Reds back in front in a pulsating game. After he's fouled, he then bends home the free-kick.

4 DEC 2013 NORWICH (H) 5-1
Scores his fourth on the night with a 20-yarder that unerringly finds John Ruddy's top corner.

1 JAN 2014 HULL CITY (H) 2-0
Another set-piece pearl, this time finding the opponents' near post from 25 yards out on the diagonal.



Photos by John Powell


"It was a big decision but I wanted to help Liverpool defend their WSL title"
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GEM CHECKS



MA
IN

Liverpool ladies have a new winger – and Gemma Davison can't wait to show everyone what she can do. Kelsey Maxwell asks the questions

As a new Liverpool player what are you most looking forward to?

I'm really excited in general. I went to Anfield on the day I signed and felt really welcome. In regards to playing with the team it will be different to Arsenal because I have been used to living around the London area but from what I've seen of Liverpool so far it's a great city, so I cant wait to get started.

You've been part of the Arsenal team for years. Was it tough to make the move away?

It is a new chapter as I've been at Arsenal since I was 14 so to step away from that was a big decision for me. But I wanted to try something fresh and I wanted to come to a club that has a similar unity and hopefully I can bring to the table what I did at Arsenal. I want to help Liverpool defend the title and they are obviously going to be in the UEFA Champions League at the end of the season which is something I've been a part of for a long time. So to bring my experience will hopefully be good for the team. Getting back into the England squad is a big aim of mine and I want to obviously stamp my authority on that. But it's one thing at a time because I want to settle in at Liverpool first!

England have a new boss in ex-Bristol coach Mark Sampson - what's your verdict?

It's something fresh for England and all the girls are going to look to impress. For me, I need to produce consistent performances and hope for a shot at the squad [Gemma won her first cap since 2009 in Sampson's first game in charge against Norway on 17 February].



The girls celebrate their 2013 title win

How do you think Liverpool will defend their league title?

They performed well during 2013 and if they can match those standards again they will be very hard to beat. They play some really good football and have some great players with the likes of Fara Williams, Natasha Dowie and Lucy Bronze. There are players in the squad that are solid and I think they will be a difficult team to beat.

Where do you see your role in the team?

I'm definitely a wide player. When I was in the Under 19s I played as a centre-forward, but I've got pace and I think one of my strengths is one-on-ones, taking on players and putting crosses into the box. I think I can bring that to the table. Natasha Dowie is someone that will hopefully finish everything off in the box as well.

And Nicole Rolser was one of the top wingers and goalscorers in the FA WSL last year...

Nicole is a very, very big player for Liverpool. I think she went a little bit unnoticed at the start but by the end of the season she was definitely one of the top goalscorers. For me and a lot of the girls at Arsenal, she was probably one of the best players I played against throughout the season. She was a big attraction in me to coming to Liverpool because she's similar to me in the sense that she is exciting to watch, quick, can take on players and scores goals. Getting more goals is something I want to bring into my game at Liverpool.

Manchester City Ladies are now in the FA WSL – what kind of a threat will they lose?

They will be a threat, but I think its good for women's football that they have put money behind it and they are trying to raise the awareness and profile of women's football. They've signed some great players such as Toni Duggan, Jill Scott, Steph Houghton and Karen Bardsley. They will provide a challenge, but I think the league in general will be because the standards of the teams like are improving all the time. For me, Arsenal will be the biggest threat while Chelsea could be the underdogs. It should be an interesting year!

> **"I'm definitely a wide player, I've got pace and like to take on players and put crosses in"**

HELLOS & GOODBYES

Gemma Davison was born in Barnet on 17 April 1987. She started her career with Watford Ladies before joining Arsenal. The winger has also spent time playing in America, most recently with New Jersey-based Sky Blue. American youth international goalkeeper Libby Stout, 23, has arrived from BV Cloppenburg in Germany. A commanding and athletic keeper, she has also played for French side Femin Yzeure Allier Auvergne.

Martha Harris, below, was the first signing of the winter window. The versatile defender joins from Lincoln Ladies and has been part of the England U-19 squad.

Leaving the club is centre-back Whitney Engen, unavailable due to commitments to the USA national team. She will play her club football for Houston Dash. Keepers Sarah Quantrill and Rachael Laws have moved on, as have midfielder Jess Holbrook and forward Sarah Gregorius, while Louise Fors has joined Swedish side Alta IF on loan.



GAME ON!



New Manchester City striker Toni Duggan

With the FA WSL season kicking off in April we take a look at the movers and shakers in the winter window...

Liverpool Ladies manager Matt Beard believes the new season will be the most competitive in the history of the women's game in this country.

As the Reds bid to retain their league title, they seem set to be pushed all the way by newcomers Manchester City as well as the usual suspects.

City hope to become as big a force in the ladies set-up as they are in the men's game after being elected to the FA WSL. They have made some significant signings, including a quartet of England internationals.

Chelsea are also strongly tipped to be among the pacesetters after making major moves in the market themselves, while Arsenal have started something of a rebuilding process after several players left the club. Their recruits include England captain Casey Stoney and Dutch international Anouk Hoogendijk, pictured above.

Another side to keep an eye on will be Notts County who have been rebranded following a controversial move from Lincoln. The new club has moved 37 miles from Sincil Bank to Meadow Lane.

Last season's runners-up Bristol Academy have lost manager Mark Sampson to England but hope to make another push for honours under new boss Dave Edmondson, formerly in charge of Melbourne Victory.

Despite losing some of their England stars to Manchester City, Everton have secured the services of 16 of their players for the new campaign and boss Andy Spence will hope his young squad will continue to progress.

Finally, Birmingham City will also be hoping to be in the mix after achieving a top-four finish last term. The Blues, whose additions include ex-Liverpool striker Hannah Keryakoplis, can also look forward to a tasty Champions League quarter-final against Arsenal next month.

This season – the fourth of the FA WSL – will see an expansion of the league to include a second division, the 10-team FA WSL 2.



Ex-Red Hannah Keryakoplis is now at Birmingham

CLUB GUIDE

ARSENAL
Stadium: Meadow Park, Borehamwood
2013: 3rd **Manager:** Shelley Kerr
Ins: Siobhan Chamberlain (Bristol), Casey Stoney (Lincoln), Anouk Hoogendijk (Ajax).
Outs: Gemma Davison (Liverpool), Kim Little (Seattle Reign), Katie Chapman (Chelsea), Gilly Flaherty (Chelsea), Steph Houghton (Man City), Ellen White (Notts County).

BIRMINGHAM CITY
Stadium: DCS Stadium, Stratford-upon-Avon **2013:** 4th **Manager:** Dave Parker
Ins: Remi Allen (Lincoln), Hannah Keryakoplis (Stoke City).
Outs: Laura Bassett (Chelsea).

BRISTOL ACADEMY
Stadium: Stoke Gifford Stadium, Filton
2013: 2nd **Manager:** Dave Edmondson
Ins: None. **Outs:** Siobhan Chamberlain (Arsenal).

CHELSEA
Stadium: Wheatsheaf Park, Staines
2013: 7th **Manager:** Emma Hayes
Ins: Laura Bassett (Birmingham City), Katie Chapman (Arsenal), Gilly Flaherty (Arsenal), Rachel Williams (Birmingham City), Ji So-yun (INAC Kobe Leonessa). **Outs:** Carly Telford (Notts County).

EVERTON
Stadium: Halton Stadium, Widnes
2013: 5th **Manager:** Andy Spence
Ins: None. **Outs:** Jill Scott (Manchester City), Toni Duggan (Manchester City).

LIVERPOOL
Stadium: Halton Stadium, Widnes
2013: 1st **Manager:** Matt Beard
Ins: Martha Harris (Lincoln Ladies), Gemma Davison (Arsenal), Libby Stout (BV Cloppenburg).
Outs: Whitney Engen (Houston Dash), Louisie Fors (Alta IF, loan), Jess Holbrook (Man City), Sarah Quantrill, Sarah Gregorius (all released), Rachael Laws (Sunderland, loan completed).

MANCHESTER CITY
Stadium: Manchester Regional Arena
2013: 4th (Women's Premier League)
Manager: Nick Cushing
Ins: Jill Scott (Everton), Toni Duggan (Everton), Steph Houghton (Arsenal), Betsy Hassett (Sand), Karen Bardsley (Lincoln), Jess Holbrook (Liverpool). **Outs:** None.

NOTTS COUNTY
Stadium: Meadow Lane, Nottingham
2013: 6th (as Lincoln Ladies)
Manager: Rick Passmoor
Ins: Ellen White (Arsenal), Carly Telford (Chelsea), Katie Hoyle (Melbourne Victory), Desiree Scott (Kansas City), Rachel Corsie (Glasgow City), Anna Green (Sydney FC), Caitlin Friend (Notts County).
Outs: Karen Bardsley (Man City), Martha Harris (Liverpool), Remi Allen (Birmingham), Casey Stoney (Arsenal).

Signings information correct to 27.01.14

100

50



Garcia – goal

CHELSEA (OLD TRAFFORD) WON 2-1

FA Cup semi-final 22 April 2006

Almost a year after wrecking Chelsea's Champions League dream at the last-four stage Liverpool inflicted another dose of semi-final heartache on Jose Mourinho's men, this time in the FA Cup. Chelsea were going for the double but Rafa's Reds made sure of their place in the final with a well-deserved victory. For the opening hour there was little evidence of the gulf in resources between the two clubs and Liverpool went in at half-time a goal to the good through John Arne Riise's free-kick. Within eight minutes of the restart Luis Garcia popped up again with a sweetly-struck half-volley from the edge of the box that gave Carlo Cudicini no chance. Didier Drogba pulled a goal back to ensure a nervous finale but it proved to be a mere consolation as the Reds drew up plans for another trip to Cardiff.

PART SIX: 50 TO 41 By Mark Platt

GREATEST GAMES

49 LEEDS UNITED (H) WON 2-0

First Division 23 April 1973

An eighth First Division title – a record at the time – was all but secured in a game Bill Shankly later described as the best seen in Britain that season. On a tense Easter Monday afternoon a packed Kop was in ear-splitting form for the visit of Don Revie's Leeds United – our arch rivals of the time – and they roared their heroes to victory. Second-half goals from Peter Cormack and Kevin Keegan clinched the points in an absorbing contest played at breakneck speed throughout. With just one more fixture remaining Arsenal still had a mathematical chance of overhauling them but Shankly's second great team had come of age. The Leeds players formed a guard of honour to applaud them off at the end and Shanks told reporters, "I think we can call ourselves champions now."



ANFIELD CHAMPIONSHIP SPECIAL

Salute to the champions!

Shankly – How can we be caught?

It'll take an earthquake to rob Reds



Casillas – disconsolate

48 REAL MADRID (H) WON 4-0

Champions League Round of 16 second leg 10 March 2009

Europe's most decorated club was handed a footballing lesson on their first-ever visit to Anfield. According to Spanish newspaper Marca, playing in front of the Kop would hold no fears for such a star-studded side as Real Madrid – but how wrong they were. Holding a 1-0 lead from the first leg the Reds burst out of the starting blocks and the outcome of the tie was never in doubt once Fernando Torres had doubled the aggregate score after 16 minutes. Before the half-hour mark it was 2-0, Steven Gerrard converting from the penalty spot. Gerrard netted his second on the volley just after the break and substitute Andre Dossena added the finishing touch a minute from time. It was to be the last great European night of the Benitez era – but what a night it had been.





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47 ASTON VILLA (H) WON 3-0

First Division 8 May 1979

DIVISION 1 TABLE

(Up to and including Saturday 28 April 1979)

	P.	W.	D.	L.	Goals F.	Goals A.	Pts
LIVERPOOL	38	26	8	4	76	16	60
West Brom A.	37	21	11	5	69	33	53
Nottingham F.	38	18	17	3	54	23	53
Everton	41	17	16	8	51	39	50
Leeds Utd.	39	17	14	8	65	44	48
Arsenal	40	17	12	11	60	47	46
Ipswich T.	40	18	9	13	56	47	45
Aston Villa	38	14	15	9	56	43	43
Coventry C.	41	13	16	12	55	68	42
Manchester Utd.	38	14	13	11	55	58	41
Bristol C.	41	15	10	16	47	49	40
Southampton	40	12	16	12	47	50	40
Middlesbrough	40	14	10	16	54	49	38
Norwich C.	41	7	22	12	50	56	36

Forty years to the day that he signed for Liverpool as a player, Bob Paisley the manager celebrated by leading the Reds to an 11th League title. Just one point from their remaining three games was required to reclaim the title from Nottingham Forest and the Liverpool class of 78/79 was in determined mood. In their final home game of what had been a thrilling season they ruthlessly dispose of Aston Villa.

Watched by a crowd of over 50,000, the champions-elect were a goal to the good within 48-seconds thanks to Alan Kennedy. By the interval a fine solo effort by Kenny Dalglish had doubled the advantage and Terry McDermott completed the scoring shortly before the hour-mark with a stunning volley. In a record-breaking campaign it was a fitting way to mark their coronation.

46 WOLVES (A) WON 2-1

First Division 31 May 1947

It was a thrilling climax to the inaugural post-war Football League season with Liverpool ensuring that the destiny of the title went down to the wire with victory at baking-hot Molineux in their final game. Wolves had been long-time leaders and two more points would've seen them crowned champions, but George Kay's 'Crazy Gang' defied the odds to maintain their own challenge. Albert Stubbins and Jack Balmer fired the Reds into a shock first-half lead that silenced the majority of the capacity crowd. The hosts pulled a goal back but Liverpool hung on to snatch top spot and ensure a nervous two-week wait before Stoke's failure to beat Sheffield United saw them confirmed as champions for a fifth time.

AN EPIC LIVERPOOL VICTORY

Goals were the finest in twenty years

By [illegible] EDWARDS ("[illegible]")

WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS 1 [illegible], LIVERPOOL 2 [illegible]

Highlights



Ryan Babel scores the goal that put the tie beyond doubt

ARSENAL (H) WON 4-2

Champions League quarter-final second leg 8 April 2008

With the teams tied at one apiece from the first leg a tense night was always in prospect and at half-time there was nothing to separate them – Arsenal cancelling out Liverpool's away goal at the Emirates through Abou Diaby only for Sami Hyypia to equalise. When Fernando Torres turned the Gunners defence and smashed a shot into the Kop net on 69 minutes it was Advantage Liverpool – and that's how it remained until six minutes from time. A rapid counter-attack by the visitors resulted in Emmanuel Adebayor tapping home what looked to be the goal that would secure Arsenal's passage into the last four, but there was yet another twist when Steven Gerrard fired home from the penalty spot at the Kop end. With the visitors then pushing frantically forward in search of another goal, Ryan Babel raced through to score Liverpool's fourth and put the result beyond doubt.



44 EVERTON (MAINE ROAD) WON 2-0

FA Cup semi-final 25 March 1950

Liverpool booked their first-ever trip to Wembley at the expense of Everton in neutral Manchester. A crowd of 72,000 crammed into Maine Road to witness this titanic battle between the Mersey rivals and thanks to a goal in each half it was the Reds who won through to the final. After weathering an early Everton storm Liverpool took the lead just before the half-hour mark when Bob Paisley lobbed George Burnett in the Blues goal after the keeper failed to clear a shot from Jimmy Payne. Liverpudlian nerves remained fraught until the 62nd minute when Billy Liddell seized on a misplaced pass out of the Everton defence and drilled low into the far corner. With a two-goal cushion Liverpool saw out the remainder of the game and a long-awaited day-out beneath the Twin Towers beckoned.



PIANOS
RUSHWORTH'S

"NATIONAL" STORY—SEE PAGE 5

Liverpool Echo FINAL

Anfield Side To Make Its Bow At Wembley

It's a Liverpool—Arsenal Final

Paisley And Liddell Did The Trick

Team Had Better Balance In Attack Than Everton And Deserved Their Win

By RANGER

Freebooter Winning The Grand National

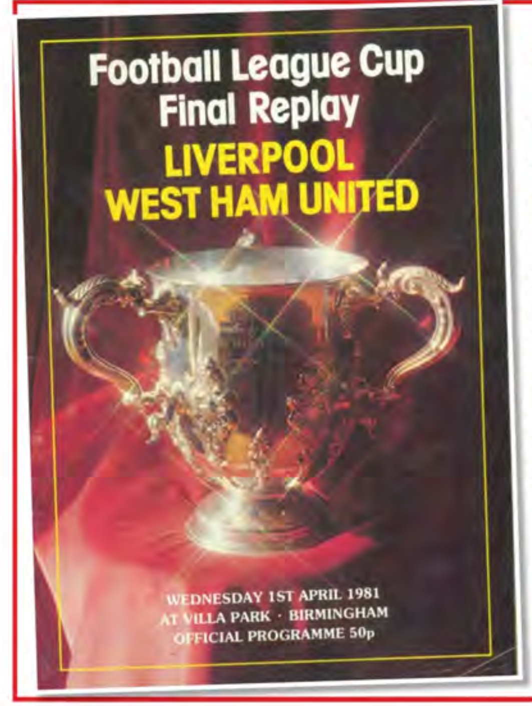
To-Day's

F.A. CUP—Semi-Final

DIVISION I.

DIVISION II.

RUGBY UNION



43 WEST HAM UNITED (VILLA PARK) WON 2-1

League Cup final replay 1 April 1981

Two decades after first entering the competition Liverpool's League Cup bogey was finally laid to rest – but only after surviving a scare against Second Division West Ham at Villa Park. Following the drama of the first game at Wembley, when Ray Stewart's last-gasp penalty earned a 1-1 draw, the Hammers took a surprise lead in the replay when Paul Goddard netted after five minutes. Kenny Dalglish levelled midway through the half with a stretching volley at the Holte End. Three minutes later Alan Hansen's header was deflected into the net off Billy Bonds. The only piece of domestic silverware that had eluded LFC's grasp was on its way to the trophy cabinet.

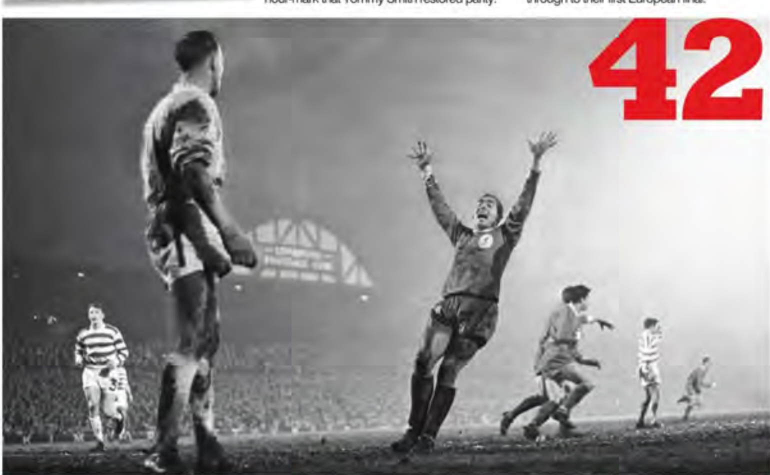


YES, IT'S LIVERPOOL THE GREATEST

CELTIC (H) WON 2-0

European Cup Winners Cup semi-final second leg 19 April 1966

The 'Battle of Britain' lived up to its pre-match hype and a massive contingent of Celtic fans helped create an electric atmosphere as Anfield staged one of its most stirring encounters. Trailing 1-0 from the first leg, the Reds tore into the Celts but it wasn't until the hour-mark that Tommy Smith restored parity. That paved the way, six minutes later, for the hobbling Geoff Strong to write himself into Kop folklore. Despite carrying an injury he rose above the opposition defence to head home past Ronnie Simpson, prompting commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme to famously roar: "The cripple has scored!" It turned out to be the winner. There was late drama when Bobby Lennox had a goal controversially ruled out for offside and the travelling supporters showed their displeasure by littering the pitch with empty whisky bottles – but Liverpool were through to their first European final.



41 NEWCASTLE UNITED (H) WON 4-3

Premier League 3 April 1996

It continually comes out on top when polls are conducted to determine the greatest game of the Premier League era, and although football existed long before 1992 it's more than worthy of a place in any list of Liverpool's greatest games. Both sides were vying for the title with Manchester United and maximum points were of paramount importance. From start to finish the action ebbed and flowed from end to end. Each side enjoyed spells in the lead but with minutes remaining and the score tied at 3-3 a draw looked likely until Stan Collymore pounced to fire a dramatic winner in front of the Kop. Ecstatic celebrations ensued among the home the fans, the travelling Geordies wept and a despairing Kevin Keegan held his head in his hands. It had been an unforgettable evening's entertainment.



NEXT MONTH: PART SEVEN

FRANK WARREN
PRESENTS

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RAINHAM STEEL


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THE COUTINHO STORY

THE MIDFIELDER'S FIRST YEAR HAS BEEN LIKE SOMETHING FROM A COMIC BOOK...

JANUARY 2013 BROUGHT A TOUCH OF BRILLIANCE TO LIVERPOOL FC WHEN PHILIPPE COUTINHO MOVED FROM SERIE A. THE YOUNG BRAZILIAN NEEDED A FRESH CHALLENGE AND LFC WAS THE PERFECT FIT – WITH THE KOP SOON DEVISING A SONG FOR THEIR NEW HERO. WHAT A 12 MONTHS IT'S BEEN FOR THE KID WITH MAGIC IN HIS BOOTS...

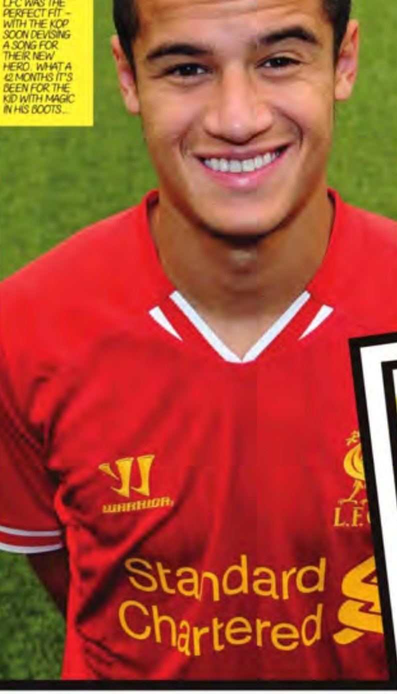


THE BOY FROM BRAZIL IS STILL ONLY 20 AND ALL SMILES WHEN HE JOINS THE REDS FROM INTER MILAN IN JANUARY 2013 AND GETS THE COVETED NO.10 SHIRT





IT'S STRAIGHT INTO TRAINING AT MELWOOD WITH HIS NEW LFC TEAM-MATES



DEBUT DAY...

PHILIPPE APPEARS AT ANFIELD FOR THE FIRST TIME AS A SUB AGAINST WEST BROM ON 11 FEB 2013 – BUT THE REDS GO DOWN 2-0 IN A MONDAY MATCH TO FORGET

Can't wait to get back out there and show the fans what I can really do...

TURN OVER

This kid's got magic in his boots

You beauty!

PING!

SIX DAYS LATER HE'S LEAPING FOR JOY AFTER SCORING AT HOME TO SWANSEA CITY ON HIS FULL DEBUT IN A 5-0 ROUT - BEATING THE KEEPER WITH A LOW DRIVE FROM THE EDGE OF THE BOX



BACK AT MELWOOD FELLOW BRAZILIAN LUCAS TAKES THE YOUNG GENIUS UNDER HIS WING



...AT READING A CHEEKY BACK-HEEL FINDS THE NET BUT IT'S RULED OUT FOR OFFSIDE IN A GOALLESS DRAW

IN BETWEEN DAZZLING ASSISTS FOR GOALS AGAINST WIGAN AND ASTON VILLA HE SCORES HIMSELF AT SOUTHAMPTON BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO PREVENT A 3-1 DEFEAT BY THE IN-FORM SAINTS...



NO SUCH TROUBLE AT ST JAMES' PARK WHERE THE MIGHTY REDS THUMP NEWCASTLE 6-0 - AND PHILIPPE IS FIRST TO CONGRATULATE DANIEL AGGER ON THE OPENER



IN THE SEASON FINALE AGAINST QPR AT ANFIELD – ALSO CARRA'S FAREWELL MATCH – COUTINHO CRACKS ONE HOME FROM 25 YARDS OUT TO CAP AN AWESOME IMPACT AT LIVERPOOL SINCE HIS TRANSFER-WINDOW ARRIVAL

THUMP!

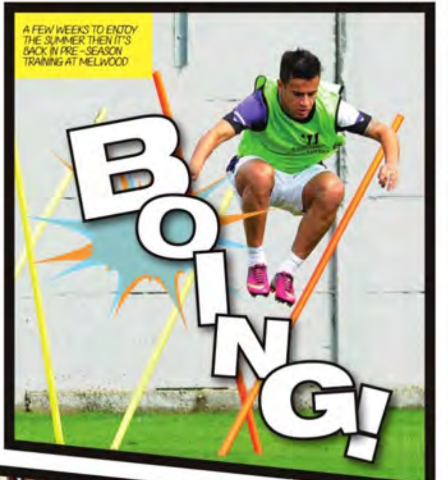
What a strike that was!

The goalie's still diving for it!

Caught it on the sweet spot!

TURN OVER


ONE FOR THE ALBUM DURING THE ANFIELD LAP OF HONOUR WITH PALS AND FAMILIES


A FEW WEEKS TO ENJOY THE SUMMER THEN IT'S BACK IN PRE-SEASON TRAINING AT MELWOOD
BOING!


HE WASTES NO TIME SCORING IN THE FIRST GAME OF THE SUMMER TOUR - AFTER A MAZY RUN AGAINST AN INDONESIAN XI...
Boss new kit this
...FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER GOAL IN THE NEXT GAME - AFTER SOME OUTRAGEOUS FOOTWORK AGAINST THE THAILAND NATIONAL TEAM


It's warmer than Brazil!
IF IT'S JULY IT MUST BE JAKARTA! PHILIPPE AND THE LADS TOUCH DOWN IN INDONESIA TO START THEIR PRE-SEASON TOUR...


THEN IT'S OVER TO OSLO FOR ANOTHER WARM-UP MATCH AFTER SIGNING THE BONNET OF AN LFC-MAD NORWEGIAN'S CUSTOMISED CAR!
WHEN THE TEAM GETS HOME A PAIR OF PHILIPPE'S BOOTS FROM LAST SEASON HAVE BEEN DONATED TO THE NEW LFC MUSEUM


JUST FOUR GAMES INTO THE NEW PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON AND COUTINHO'S CAMPAIGN IS BROUGHT TO A PAINFUL HALT WHEN HE FALLS AWKWARDLY AFTER A CHALLENGE WITH ASHLEY WILLIAMS IN THE 2-2 DRAW AT SWANSEA CITY
PHILIPPE NEEDS SURGERY BUT WITHIN SIX WEEKS HE'S RARING TO GO AGAIN – AND THE BOSS IS DELIGHTED
Grrrr
Dead jammy that
AS IF THE KOPITES DIDN'T LOVE HIM ENOUGH ALREADY COUTINHO ENDEARS HIMSELF EVEN MORE WITH A GOAL IN NOVEMBER'S THRILLING GOODISON DERBY – FIRING HOME UNMARKED FROM STEVEN GERRARD'S CORNER AFTER ONLY FIVE MINUTES
Just can't reach it!
TURN OVER


Merry Christmas!
and a Happy New Year!
IN DECEMBER THE LADS PAY THEIR SEASONAL VISIT TO THE CHILDREN AT ALDER HEY...
THE YEAR 2013 DRAWS TO A CLOSE WITH A GOAL AGAINST MANCHESTER CITY IN A PULSATING ENCOUNTER AT THE ETIHAD – ON 24 MINUTES THE HOSTS ARE CUT OPEN BY A SCINTILLATING LIVERPOOL MOVE THAT ENDS WITH PHILIPPE'S NEAT ANGLED FINISH AFTER RAHEEM STERLING ROUNDS CITY KEEPER JOE HART
DINK!
Race ya!
THEN PHIL'S BACK AT MELWOOD – WITH YOUNG TEAM-MATE JORDON IBE FOR COMPETITION...
...AND KEEPING OUT THE COLD IN A BEANIE HAT ON CHRISTMAS EVE
The boss just wants me to move around and create openings and I'm pleased people like my style of football. My priority is to win trophies and be part of Liverpool's history – and if I get the chance to play for Brazil in the World Cup, what a bonus!
ROLL ON 2014!
PHILIPPE GOES INTO THE SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON AS ONE OF LIVERPOOL'S TOP PERFORMERS, REVEALING THAT BRENDAN RODGERS HAS GIVEN HIM FREE REIN TO FIND SPACE AND PICK OUT KILLER PASSES
TO BE CONTINUED



1

Patience – don't sweat if you haven't blown opponents away with early goals. "It might take 80 minutes but we would keep playing patiently and gradually things would go right," said Bill Shankly. "The number of goals we scored in the last five minutes was unbelievable. It usually takes the heart out of the opposition and then sometimes you can end up with two or three goals – all scored at the end."

2

Unity – before kick-off laughter would often be heard outside the Liverpool dressing-room. Striker Paul Walsh, who played for and against the Reds, recalls: "[For the visiting team] it was dispiriting. The Liverpool boys did not appear scared. They appeared like a force – a team, as one. It was as if they were not affected by pressure or worried by the individuals they were facing. After going there, I realised this was not an act. The spirit was tighter than anywhere else I'd been."

3

Tactics – historically Liverpool's greatest teams performed to an organised yet fluid system. Players were ready to improvise. If a left-back attacked, someone else would fill his position. "When you are playing 50, 60 or 70 games a season you need to conserve energy," Shankly said. "Nobody has to work harder than anyone else. It is also confusing for the opposition because they never know who they are supposed to be marking."

4

Fitness – avoiding injuries isn't just down to luck. Preparation is key. Liverpool did not over-tax players in the pre-season. "Other clubs asked too much too soon and as a result you start the season with muscles that are overstretched," Bob Paisley said. It happened once that Ray Clemence missed vital games because he'd been crocked practising goal-kicks. "His presence could've made the difference," Bob added.

5

Resilience – win when you're playing badly. Kenny Dalglish once claimed that any successful team would only perform to its full potential in 50 per cent of games. "There was an impression that Liverpool dominated possession and steamrollered teams every week," former skipper Phil Thompson remembers. "But in a lot of away games we'd soak up pressure and play on the break. It says a lot about the defiance of the players."

ECRET SUCCESS

Simon Hughes traces these 10 historical steps

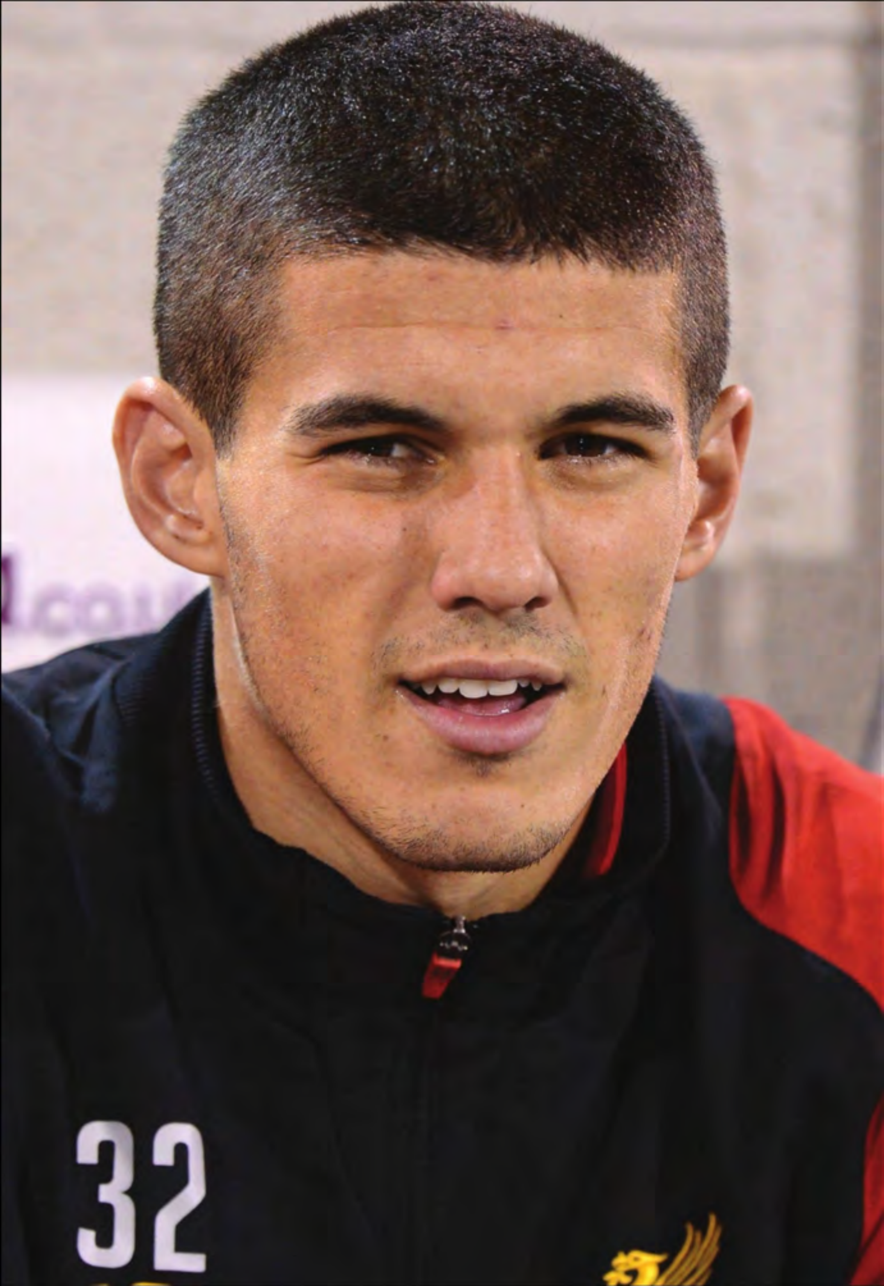
6 **Talent** – supremely confident as he already was, Graeme Souness was awestruck by the ability of his new team-mates when he joined the club. "People always wonder what is the most important ingredient that a successful team has. There is no big secret – you get good players together in one place and get them to fight for the same cause. Ultimately the core quality has to be a level of ability mixed with the mentality."

7 **Leadership** – Michael Robinson, who spent 18 months as a Liverpool centre-forward, vividly recalls the atmosphere inside the dressing-room before the second leg of a League Cup second-round tie against Brentford at Anfield in 1983. Liverpool were already 4-1 up from the first leg yet Graeme Souness was reminding everyone of their responsibilities. "It was fist-pumping and back-slapping. We were playing Brentford, we were already leading, but it felt like we were going to war."

8 **Clean sheets** – the old Liverpool mantra was that a capable goalkeeper was worth a minimum of 10 points a season, even if they were rarely called upon during games. "Sometimes I feel I'm hardly wanted in this Liverpool team," commented Ray Clemence. "If I get two or three saves to make I've had a busy day." In the 1978/79 league season Liverpool conceded just 16 goals, with Clemence an ever-present between the sticks for the sixth season on the run, keeping 28 clean sheets and only conceding four goals at Anfield. Liverpool unsurprisingly won the title.

9 **Finance** – Liverpool's scouting department regularly spotted players in the lower leagues but not necessarily for a bargain fee. "I remember seeing how much Liverpool spent on me," Steve Nicol said. "I couldn't believe they would spent £300,000 on a player from Ayr. It gave me a lot of confidence that they were prepared to pay a lot of money, knowing that eventually I'd come good."

10 **Goalscorers** – the last 10 times that Liverpool have won the league, at least one player has scored more than 20 times. It reflects how important it is to have a goalscorer in the team. John Barnes, leading goalscorer in 1989/90, played with three prolific strikers during his time at the club – Ian Rush, John Aldridge and Robbie Fowler. "It wasn't the games we won 5-0 or 6-0 where their value was really highlighted," he said. "It was when the scoreline was 0-0 and you knew it was next goal the winner. We often scraped games where either Rushie or Aldo pounced."


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MADE-UP IN SHEFFIELD

Young Red Conor Coady is learning fast on loan across the Pennines, he tells Aiden Cusick

Conor Coady hopes his loan spell at Sheffield United will inspire other Reds youngsters to head out in search of first-team football.

The 20-year-old, who recently extended his stay at the League One outfit until the end of February, believes spending time at another club is "something you've got to do" as a young player coming through.

"You've only got to look at players who've been out on loan and gone on to play first-team football [at their parent club]," he says. "There are loads that do it – the likes of Andre Wisdom at Derby who are absolutely flying at the minute. It's a fantastic move for him and he'll no doubt come back a better player."

But Conor also stresses the importance of testing yourself at Under-21 level first, something he did ahead of his move to the Steel City, adding that loans are more beneficial if you do them at the right age.

"I think you need a year or two in the U21s to bring you on, especially at a club like Liverpool. The amount of staff they've got there can really help to develop you as a player."

His belief is that, ultimately, the new academy system [U21 and U18 and no reserve-team] will see better players coming through at first-team level. "It's definitely aiding player development. The environment is a lot different. In the reserves you were just playing games, you never really knew what was going on, whereas now you're fighting for your place in a league and it's a tough, competitive one, which is good."

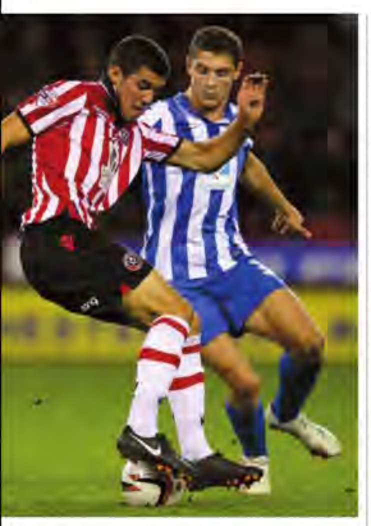
> **"Lads who go out on loan and play first-team football can come back as better players"**

He singles out another Liverpool youngster as a good example of how the system is already working. "Look at Jordan Rossiter and how it's brought him on. He's played at that level early and now he's making the bench for the first team. I think all it can do is help.

"I'd had a couple of years in the reserves so it was time for me to get out there, start playing proper football and learn what it's about to go and play in the league."

When the opportunity came – off the back of an Under-20 World Cup campaign with England – Conor says he was "more than happy" to make the temporary switch to South Yorkshire. "Brendan [Rodgers] came to me and said: 'Sheffield United are interested, we think it'll be good for you'. I knew it was a massive club and a great place to learn my trade. I went in that week and I've played a few games now so I'm made-up." His tally now stands at over 20 appearances with a





On the ball for Blades v Hartlepool last October

first goal coming in November's draw with Leyton Orient at the Matchroom Stadium in East London.

Settling in was "no trouble" as several of his Blades team-mates live this side of the Pennines, making his commute to the Steel City slightly more stress-free. "It was very easy for me [to settle]. The lads have been fantastic, a few of them live out Manchester and Preston way so I've been living at home and commuting there. We share lifts so I only really have to drive once a week. The night before a game I'll stay in the hotel that's by Bramall Lane. The travelling's not too bad, but it's always better to stay over and make sure you're right for the day after."

On the pitch it wasn't such plain sailing. After winning their opening match of the campaign against Notts County, the Blades went nine league games without a win – a run that cost manager David Weir his job. The Scot had a big hand in Coady's switch to the Lane, having come across the 20-year-old during his time spent coaching at Everton, though the Kirkby graduate refuses to dwell on Weir's departure.

"It didn't affect me much really. Davie Weir was good to me but as soon as Nigel Clough came in we just had to carry on what we were doing – working hard and trying to impress him. Hopefully I did that. He's [Clough] been good with me. He lets me know what he wants, where I've been going wrong and what I need to work on."

In terms of style at least, the transition between the two managers was relatively straightforward, and Conor credits this as the catalyst in his development over the last six months. "The fact the managers both want to play football has really brought me on. The thing I've improved the most is receiving the ball off the back-four and automatically looking forward. When you play at first-team level it's important to look forward at all times. It's easy to pass sideways so working on getting the ball and ensuring my first pass is a positive one has improved my game massively."

It's something which should stand him in good stead for his return to Anfield – initially scheduled after United's FA Cup win over Aston Villa at the start of January until the two clubs agreed on an extension – where he would relish the opportunity to push for a place in the Reds engine room.

"Central midfield is where I've been brought up playing. I like to get on the ball as much as possible. I've played a bit at centre-back for Liverpool [for the reserves and U21s] but for United I've always played centre-mid."

Both of Conor's first-team appearances for Liverpool came in his favoured midfield role, including his debut against Anzhi Makhachkala in November 2012 when a youthful Reds side were defeated 1-0. "You always dream of having your debut for Liverpool, the team I grew up with, but to have it out in Russia was superb. It was a mad experience but just to make my debut was absolutely fantastic and I loved every single minute of it."

Conor also featured as a late substitute in the victory over Fulham in

"Centre-mid is where I've been brought up playing – I like to get on the ball"

the penultimate game of the 2012/13 campaign, and hopes to be handed more opportunities to show what he can do when he returns. But he has no qualms about extending his spell in Sheffield and believes the experience of playing in front of big crowds can only aid his transition to the first team at Anfield.

"That's been the highlight for me, playing at Bramall Lane. It's a great stadium. They get very big capacities for a League One side and playing in front of them has been fantastic for my development."

After United's disappointing start, Conor is hoping that the remainder of his spell will coincide with an upturn in fortunes for the Blades. "For us now it's about taking one game at a time and seeing where we end up come the end of the season. We've got to keep on building as a team. For me, it's all about improving."

Loans that paid off

Glen Johnson, then 17, joined Millwall on a month-long spell from West Ham and impressed enough for his deal to be extended twice.

Jose Enrique spent the 2005/06 campaign on loan at Celta Vigo from Valencia. His performances earned him a move to then Champions League contenders, Villarreal.

Jordan Henderson's successful spell at Coventry in 2009 propelled the 23-year-old into the first-team picture at parent club, Sunderland.

Philippe Coutinho went on loan from Inter Milan to Espanyol, then managed by Mauricio Pochettino, in 2012. He scored five goals in 16 appearances.

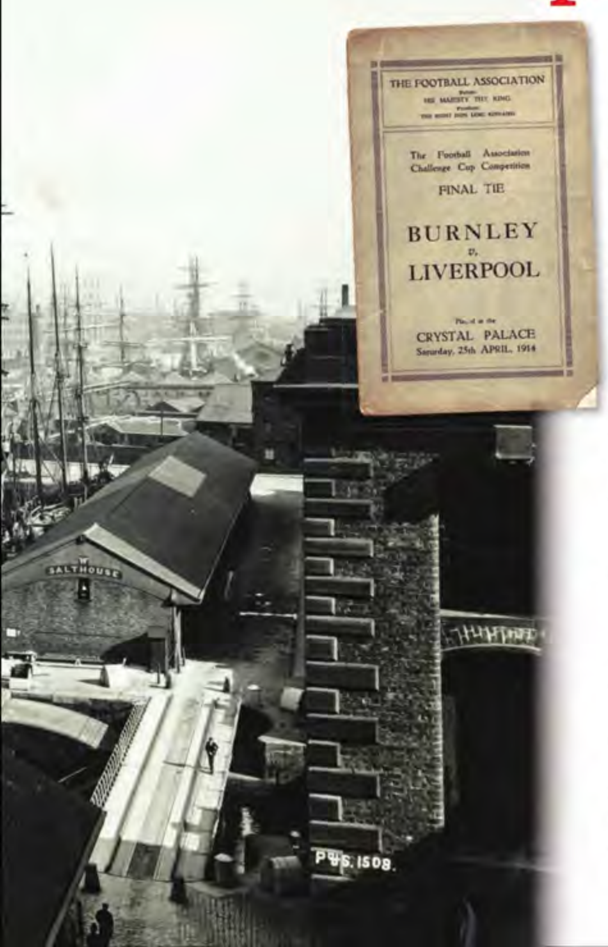
Daniel Sturridge's eight goals in 12 appearances while loaned to Bolton Wanderers by Chelsea in 2011 gave him a stage to display his arch goalscoring ability.



One hundred years the crest of a wave seventh of the world's football club reached



ago Liverpool was on –the city owned one shipping and the its first FA Cup final


THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

The Football Association Challenge Cup Competition

FINAL TIE

BURNLEY
v.
LIVERPOOL

CRYSTAL PALACE
Saturday, 25th APRIL, 1914

The Mersey, indeed, was registering a third more tonnage year on year than the Thames. But to truly appreciate the excitement that surrounded Liverpool Football Club's first trip to the capital for a cup final, a little more local context is required.

The FA Cup had quickly become an important part of the football calendar and in 1894, just two years after Liverpool's formation, the FA had awarded the final to Merseyside and Goodison Park. However only 23,000 attended the showpiece between Notts County and Bolton Wanderers, raising gate receipts of only £1,300. The FA were not impressed and the final returned to London and Crystal Palace.

Everton's bid to prove superior to the newly-founded Liverpool had seen them reach the final in 1893, the latter's debut season. They lost to Wolves, but in 1897 they saw another opportunity to lord it over their neighbours when they reached the final again (Liverpool were beaten semi-finalists). This time they were defeated by Aston Villa.

Liverpool missed out in the semis once more in 1899, but the 1905/06 season provided another pivotal point in the clubs' early rivalry. The Reds would win the league title that season and were on course for a double after reaching the last four of the FA Cup. As fate would have it, they were drawn against Everton with the match being played at Villa Park. Fans were eagerly anticipating the 90 minutes but the game turned on 90 seconds in which Everton scored twice to win 2-0. The Blues went on to win the cup for the first time, beating Newcastle and earning national acclaim in a tournament which carried as much if not more kudos than the league at the time due to its history and inclusivity.

Everton's place in the national consciousness remained secure as they also reached the final 12 months later, only to lose to The Wednesday. So when Liverpool reached the FA Cup final for the first time in 1913/14, it was a big deal.







A rare photograph of the final in progress at the Crystal Palace

"Rattles were rung and shouts of 'Liverpool forever!' were endorsed"



The social context was highlighted by news that the reigning monarch would attend the final for the first time. Football was becoming increasingly popular but such was the delicate – and worsening – political climate in Europe, it was announced that George V may not stay long enough to present the medals.

Crystal Palace's suitability for staging the final was also a hot topic. The 1913 final had attracted a crowd of 121,919 – far more than the venue could cope with – and the 1914 showpiece would be the last cup final it would hold.

Even so, thousands of Liverpudlians made the trip. On the morning of the match the *Liverpool Echo* reported: 'If the enthusiastic scenes which marked the departures of the Reds supporters last night may be taken as an indication that the Liverpool football team will be triumphant today, then success is assured.

'Never in the history of Liverpool football has there been such scenes of enthusiasm and high spirits exhibited as was the case at Lime Street Station, the Central Station, the Alexandra Dock Station, Edgehill, and Huyton. Altogether, on a modest computation, fifteen to twenty thousand people journeyed from Liverpool and district to see the great match.

'Pandemonium may well describe the picture as it presented itself. But the crowds were good-humoured, and the police had no occasion to interfere with the conduct of the thousands of people who gathered to give a hearty send-off to the supporters of the Reds.

'The streets adjacent to the stations were thick with people who either wanted to catch trains for the metropolis or who, out of curiosity or enthusiasm, made a point of seeing that the exodus was worthy of the occasion. Men and women vied with each other in the demonstration of goodwill and wishes to the Anfield side.

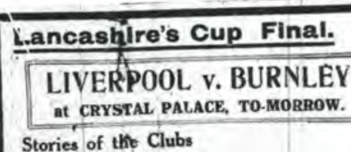
'Red button bouquets, red hats, red jackets, and red flags besprinkled the crowd, and as if these were not enough to show how the wind was blowing in regard to the prospect of the match, corncrake rattles were rung with hideous sound. Shouts of "Liverpool forever" were heartily endorsed and passed round'.

This brief tale was also relayed in the pages of the *Echo* dated 14 May 1914: 'A race to see the Cup final was revealed at Crewe today when John Gibson, a plasterer, of Samson Street, Everton, was charged with being drunk on the railway last night.

'He was travelling to the Crystal Palace, and in consequence of his conduct between Liverpool and Crewe, two ladies pulled the communication-cord and stopped the train. The prisoner then quietened down, but before Crewe was reached the train was again stopped, and he was put in the guard's van.

'The accused, who wore a huge rosette, pleaded to be dealt with as early as possible as he wanted to see Liverpool win the Cup. If he were allowed to go he could just catch the London express and arrive at the Palace after half-time.

'He hoped Liverpool would make a draw, so that he could see more of the game. He apologised for drinking the health of his team so vigorously, and was allowed to go on payment of 5s. He left the court hurriedly to catch his train'.



Lancashire's Cup Final.

LIVERPOOL v. BURNLEY
at CRYSTAL PALACE, TO-MORROW.

Stories of the Clubs
and
Special Pictures in To-morrow's
"LIVERPOOL WEEKLY POST."

Full and Exclusive Reports
and
Comments on the Match in To-morrow's
"LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL ECHO."

BEST VALUE FOR LANCASHIRE FOLK.

Words: William Hughes

LEWIS'S In Ranelagh Street LIVERPOOL



Business Suits for Youths

THE well-dressed youth in a business office gets the preference.

But there is no need for a business youth to ape the manners of the "nut."

What he does need is well-cut, sensibly-made clothes, and these Lewis's can supply.

And as befits a youth starting a business career on a modest salary, these clothes are modestly-priced.

Lewis's Ranelagh Suits for youths are cut as above illustration. Materials are grey and brown suitings, smart, hard-wearing and durable twills. These are excellent suits for youths starting a business career. Besides looking neat and gentlemanly, this suit is extremely serviceable.

Lewis's price, size 10, **19/-**

ONCE A YEAR WE HAVE THE CUP-TIE

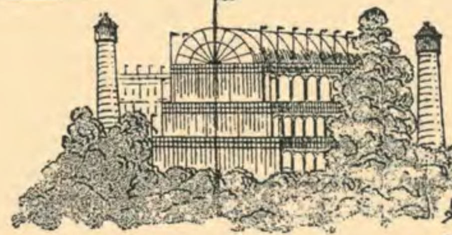
BUT EVERY DAY
WE HAVE
THE CUP FRY!

"STRONGEST & BEST"

Fry's

BREAKFAST COCOA

Makers to H.M. THE KING





Bert Freeman scores the only goal of the game

The *Liverpool Daily Post* carried a list of the venue's catering arrangements: 75,000 slices of bread and butter, 2,000 gallons of beer, 75 rumps of beef and 48,000 slices of cake!

The rising cost of watching football was one of the issues of the day and fans were effectively charged twice for the final, paying one shilling to gain entry to the 'Palace pleasure grounds' then another to be pitch-side.

Back in January that year Liverpool's cup prospects had not looked good when they were drawn against the 1912 winners Barnsley in the opening round. The *Echo* reported the Reds were fortunate to draw on a heavily-sanded Anfield pitch. They rode their luck in the Oakwell replay too the following Thursday, but thanks to some fine goalkeeping from Kenny Campbell came the first signs that this could be a special year when Wexford-born forward Bill Lacey scored an 89th-minute winner.

A home tie against Gillingham came next. At the end of January more than 42,000 fans watched as it took the Reds more than 80 minutes to break down their visitors from Kent, but late goals from Lacey and Bob Ferguson secured a 2-0 victory.

At a reserves game back at Anfield people cheered the result from the semi-final



The reward was a late-February trip to West Ham. Upton Park was bathed in mud but a goal from Scottish inside-forward Tom Miller earned a 1-1 draw and a midweek replay. Four days later Tom Watson's men cruised to a 5-1 victory at Anfield with Lacey and Miller both scoring twice.

The quarter-final on 7 March saw Liverpool beat QPR 2-0 at Anfield courtesy of goals from winger Jackie Sheldon and Miller. Within 14 months both players would be banned for their part in a match-fixing fiasco following a game at Manchester United.

Boat Race day, 28 March 1914, saw Liverpool and their legion of fans make the journey to London for a semi-final against bookies favourites Aston Villa at White Hart Lane. The man standing in their way was goalkeeper Sam Hardy, who had left Anfield for Villa the previous May. Reds boss Watson was unhappy with Liverpool's underdog status and believed it would spur his men on. Glaswegian forward Jimmy Nicholl was the hero, scoring twice as Liverpool registered what was seen as one of the shocks of the season.

Back at Anfield, Liverpool's reserves were in Central League action and local papers reported that the game was stopped as fans and players celebrated the first team's place in the final where they would meet Burnley, who had beaten Sheffield United in a replay of the other semi-final – at Goodison Park.

The two finalists took the unprecedented step of agreeing to 'replay' the tie four days later at Anfield for charity (the Theatrical Gala Fund) so that more supporters could see the trophy. Burnley's base for their preparations remained in Lancashire, at Lytham, but Liverpool opted for a few days by a golf links in Chingford, Essex.

The *Echo* was critical of Liverpool's lack of work with the ball in the build-up. Trainer Bill Connell had a withering response for the newspaper's football correspondent: 'When the boys beat the Villa they had not seen the ball for a week. Their football was good enough, eh? They relish the sight of the ball on the Saturday, and they have had such a hard time latterly that it is necessary to take measures to get their full stamina. A team of men like I have under my control do not want training in the full sense of the word. They simply want to keep the muscles lissome and limbs sound. The course of training this week will be simple. "Ball lost" is the order'.



9—THE LIVERPOOL COURIER, SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1914.—9

THE FOOTBALL FINAL.

The city's Lord Street back then – turn left for Liverpool One today



Burnley thanked Liverpool for their sporting manner after the final



Mind games were also at work. There were doubts over the fitness of Reds captain and half-back Harry Lowe in the days leading up to the game, but Watson and the Liverpool camp publicly stated he would definitely play. In the event Liverpool were led out by fellow half-back Bob Ferguson.

In sweltering heat the Reds saw plenty of the ball in the first-half but the game's defining moment came 12 minutes into the second period. Burnley's Bert Freeman, the ex-Everton forward, latched onto a pass and flashed the ball beyond Kenny Campbell. Try as they might, Liverpool couldn't find a way past the Clarets defence as they sought an equaliser, and it was Burnley who lifted the cup.

A thousand fans welcomed the squad back to Liverpool but the team had to head straight to Anfield to fulfill a league game against Sheffield United. In an anti-climactic atmosphere the Reds won 2-1. Two days later Liverpool also won the 'replayed' final against Burnley with Ferguson scoring the only goal in front of 10,00 fans who saw both teams photographed with the cup.

Burnley secretary John Haworth later wrote to Watson expressing his 'thanks for the sportsmanlike manner in which you met us after our victory in London, and the handsome manner you received us in Liverpool on Wednesday. Both days will live long in the minds of our officials and players, and perhaps you will be pleased to learn that your actions were the chief topic of conversation among our party on their return to Burnley. We feel and sincerely hope that an everlasting friendship has been made between the two clubs which reflects great credit on you, and failing my club retaining the trophy next year, our earnest wish is that you will prove successful'.

It may have ended in narrow and painful defeat, but Liverpool's cup final history had begun.

LIVERPOOL IN 1914

A century ago the port of Liverpool was in the midst of a building boom. A spectacular new Pier Head waterfront was taking shape with the Cunard Building under construction between the Royal Liver Building and Port of Liverpool Building. Collectively they'd become known as the 'Three Graces'. Also completed in 1914 was the Adelphi Hotel on Ranelagh Place – another giant building in the popular Beaux Arts style as Liverpool sought to create a skyline similar to the great American cities with which it did business. Meanwhile in the suburb of Wavertree a toymaker named Frank Hornby opened a factory for the production of Meccano, and at Anfield it would be another 14 years before a roof was put on the Spion Kop.



Main image and this page courtesy of Liverpool Record Office

Neil MELLOR

Playing against different kinds of opposition improves our youngsters

In my time as a Liverpool youth-team player we once went to Den Haag in Holland for a tournament. It was the only time we travelled abroad. Other European clubs competed. In the final we lost to West Ham United – a side that included Glen Johnson.

The general experience was significant. Being away from home for a period of time, spending lots of time with the other lads and beginning to appreciate the standards being set around Europe were just a few of the advantages.

In today's game the players are exposed to experiences like this regularly. It can only be a good thing. Early in January, Liverpool took an Under 17s team to Indonesia before another squad flew to Mexico later in the month.

I am told that in Indonesia, Liverpool played a friendly match against local opposition in front of more than 10,000 spectators. If that doesn't make you appreciate how big a club Liverpool is, nothing ever will. There you are, nearly 8,000 miles away from home, having not even played for Liverpool's first team, yet still so many people turn up to watch you. It would have humbled me.

For these players it should really hit home how no matter where you are in the world, if you're a Liverpool player you carry responsibility.

In Mexico, Liverpool played against different clubs from different continents. That poses all kinds of challenges. You see contrasting cultures, styles of football, technical and tactical approaches.

It can be a bit of a rude awakening. In England the styles can be quite similar. It is important to see what is outside the box.

The Central American and South American players are often more streetwise. I wish I'd have been exposed to this more often as I have no doubt it would have improved my understanding of the game.

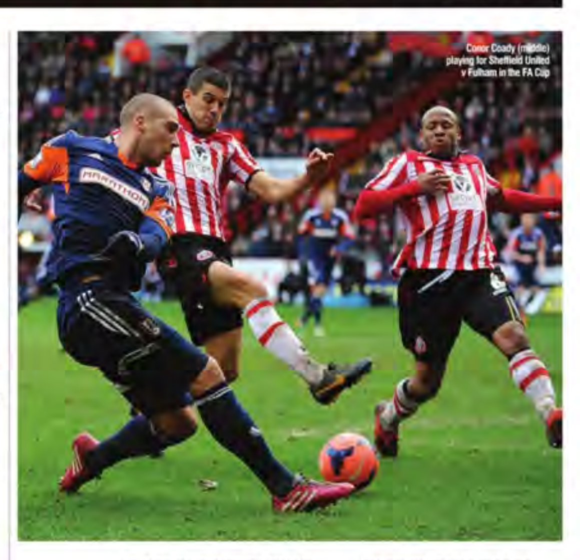
The importance of these trips cannot be underestimated. They help the learning process. A young player cannot afford to take them for granted. This does not happen at every club in the Premier League.

On a different note it has been pleasing to see Conor Coady developing well at Sheffield United. It's certainly better for a player like him to go out on loan and get a full season under his belt rather than play for the U21s and get on the bench a few times for the first team.

At Bramall Lane he's leaning at the sharp end what it's really like to be a professional footballer. So far he's played under three different managers: David Weir, Chris Morgan and now Nigel Clough. In the first few months he was in and out the team. With the change of managers, he had to prove himself several times. It could not have been easy.

Yet at the start of last month his loan was renewed until the end of February. He has since played a part in United's FA Cup run, playing in games against Premier League clubs, Aston Villa and Fulham. I know he's a mature lad anyway but this will really hammer home the reality of being a footballer. I'm sure he'll return to Melwood next summer a lot stronger and wiser.

Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33



Conor Coady (middle) playing for Sheffield United v Fulham in the FA Cup

"I'm sure Conor will return to Melwood stronger and wiser"



SCOUTING FOR PEARLS

Geoff Twentyman was Liverpool's chief scout for 20 years. He travelled to matches to watch potential new signings, stood on the terraces and asked fans for their opinion. Then he'd make notes. 'Strikes the ball well', he wrote about Phil Neal, who would become one of the club's most decorated players. Geoff retired in 1991, and February marks a decade since his death. Here are five of his finest recommendations, and five who got away...



RAY CLEMENCE

£18,000 from Scunthorpe United in June 1967
Total LFC apps: 665

The first thing Twentyman spotted about 18-year-old Clemence was the fact that he was right-footed and left-handed – ideal balance for a goalkeeper. He'd also been watched by Sheffield United and Southampton. Ray remembers travelling to Merseyside to speak to Reds boss Bill Shankly and being taken aback by the club's attentiveness. "I couldn't believe that Liverpool were making so much of an effort to impress me. They showed me round everywhere and introduced me to everyone. It made me feel like I was part of Liverpool before I'd even signed."

JOHN TOSHACK

£110,000 from Cardiff City in November 1970
Total LFC apps/goals: 247/96

The sign of the door at Anfield read 'Manager's Office'. John Toshack, then 21, knocked. Shankly spun round. His first words were memorable. "Listen son – you're coming out of Sunday school and going into church." Liverpool had trailed Toshack for three seasons, by which time he'd scored over 100 goals for Cardiff. Previously, Liverpool had agreed to sign Frank Worthington from Huddersfield before the maverick striker failed a medical. Toshack was second choice and joined in a period where Liverpool were rebuilding. "The manager had enough confidence in his signings just to let them play the way things came naturally," he recalls. "We were slung together and got on with it."



KEVIN KEEGAN

£33,000 from Scunthorpe United in May 1971
Total LFC apps/goals: 323/100

Liverpool needed a player to dovetail with Toshack's strengths, operating in the space created when two players marked the big Welshman. So Twentyman went to Scunthorpe again where 20-year-old Keegan was playing as a right-winger. In Geoff's original scouting book, his colleague Andy Beattie noted: 'Might be better as a forward'. Six months later Keegan was pulling on the no7 shirt at Anfield against Nottingham Forest alongside Toshack in a new-look attack. Liverpool won 3-1 with Keegan scoring after 12 minutes.





PHIL NEAL

£66,000 from Northampton Town in October 1974
Total LFC apps/goals: 650/59

Neal was a 23-year-old player going nowhere until one match changed his life. Northampton were playing at Rotherham and Twentyman was watching. The visiting keeper was carried off after 10 minutes and Neal volunteered to replace him. He didn't concede a goal and the Cobblers won 2-1. "Geoff felt it reflected well on my character that I had the courage to go in goal away from home," recalled Phil. "It sealed the deal."



ALAN HANSEN

£100,000 from Partick Thistle in May 1977
Total LFC apps/goals: 620/14

"People thought I was a bit slow, too casual," says Hansen of his 21-year-old self at Partick. He admits he was not obsessed by football and might have been a golfer. It was only when he signed for Liverpool that he realised how good he could be. "I'd been there on trial as a teenager but my heart wasn't really in it and it showed." After earning a pro contract with Partick, a growth spurt gave him "problems running and that's why it seemed like I was languid – not trying." It didn't deter Twentyman. Less than 12 months after signing for Liverpool, Hansen was winning the European Cup at Wembley.

They coulda been contenders

Francis Lee: the pocket dynamo would become a Man City legend. Geoff recommended Lee to Shankly in 1967 but Liverpool didn't have enough money to sign him.

Trevor Francis: in 1971, Geoff wrote of Francis: 'Lurks upfront. Could become good'. He did, only with Birmingham City, Nottingham Forest and Sampdoria.

Martin O'Neill: won two European Cups with Nottingham Forest and could've been a Liverpool player but while watching him at Distillery of N Ireland, Twentyman deemed the midfielder didn't have enough pace.

Gerry Francis: captain of QPR when they pushed Liverpool for the title in 1976. He might have been signed instead of Graeme Souness.

Tim Flowers: watched as a young prospect at Wolves in the old Fourth Division by Twentyman. Won a Premier League title with Blackburn.



words: Simon Hughes



Family guy

Striker Iago Aspas maintains a deep affection for his old club in Spain while kindling a new love for all things LFC, he tells John Hynes

Although many subjects within football are a cause of great debate, there is one certainty: players want to play. Iago Aspas definitely subscribes to that way of thinking. He would love to start every game for Brendan Rodgers' side. Simultaneously he can see exactly why he doesn't.

"Clearly it's not easy to compete with Daniel Sturridge and Luis Suarez for a place in the team," he honestly admits. "It's tough. What can you do? When the team is playing well and winning there is little I can change about it. If I was in their place, doing a good job and scoring goals, I'd be angry if the manager then left me out and put in someone else. So I understand why I am on the bench sometimes."

The 26-year-old says all this without a trace of bitterness. Instead his words are accompanied by a refreshing sense of realism. Perhaps that's because he's seen enough football to know just how good his fellow LFC forwards are right now.

As well as being a player, Aspas is an avid fan of the game and admits to an infatuation with it since his childhood days in Spain. "I love football so much, it's almost like an illness. I'm one of four brothers and three of us played. It was – and still is – a football madhouse. My mum didn't like the game at first, but because of us she had to attend at least three games every weekend. She didn't really have a choice about it.

"So anything to do with football interests me. I am always watching games, studying players or reading about it."

Therefore he's well placed to comment on the respective abilities of Sturridge and Suarez. "You can't object too much to not being in the team when they are playing. Look at their stats – they've been brilliant. Luis

"I love football so much – it's almost like a sickness! I'm always watching games"





is probably the best striker in the world at the moment."

That said, Iago isn't content to just sit on the bench. He's determined to take any chance that may come his way. "For me it's all about getting my head down in training, working hard and making sure I am always ready. If one of the others gets injured or has a dip in form I need to be able to come in and do a job for the team."

Our first fixture in this season's FA Cup brought him the kind of opportunity he refers to – with Sturridge yet to return from injury and Suarez rested, Aspas was in the starting line-up against Oldham.

He responded by opening the scoring in the 54th minute, using his weaker right foot to divert in Raheem Sterling's well-delivered cross. The forward understandably enjoyed the moment, and while he was being embraced by his team-mates Steven Gerrard had a message for him. "He congratulated me and said it will be the first of many goals I get for the club."

Breaking his Liverpool duck came during the Spaniard's 11th appearance. Waiting to do so – while also being unavailable for some of the time due to a thigh injury – was a frustrating period. "It's hard to score goals anyway, it's one of the toughest jobs in football. But I think there are two reasons why it took me a while to get my first. Because Daniel and Luis

"When I scored against Oldham Steven Gerrard said it'd be the first of many I get for the club"

are playing so well it's difficult for me to get regular minutes or continuity in the side. When you don't have that it's not easy to find your rhythm.

"Also I haven't played in my own position, as a striker, too often. All of my goals at Celta came when I was playing as an out and out centre-forward. Here I've been playing out wide or a slightly deeper role. But I'm happy to do it for the team."

Acclimatising to another country is also a factor. Learning the language – a major part of that process – is a work in progress. "I've not had any classes but my English is improving

Iago's goal v Oldham was his first for LFC in a competitive match

all the time. I think I learn by listening to people talking in the dressing-room and picking up words on the training field. I understand what most people say to me, but actually having a conversation and expressing myself is still tough at the moment."

Prior to arriving here Aspas had spent his life in northwest Spain – he hails from the coastal town of Moana. "We live off everything that comes out of the sea. The economy is totally based around fishing and similar industries. The majority of the people



work in those areas. It's a different part of Spain to Barcelona and Madrid, big places that a lot of tourists visit."

When asked which side of the El Clasico divide he falls upon Aspas chooses neither of Spain's footballing superpowers. "For me it's just Celta [Vigo] and nobody else. I went there at a very young age and they are my club." His love for the side nicknamed Os Celestes (The Sky Blues) remains, even though he now lives miles away.

"Before Christmas I went to see them play Real in the Bernabeu. They lost 3-0 against a very good team. For me, Celta is like an extended family. Most of the guys who get through to the first team have come from the academy and the reserves. They have been there for a number of years, like I was.

"Roughly 50 per cent of the players come from the province and we all feel part of the same group. It's a small club but a family club." The sentiments are similar to one of Bill Shankly's lesser-known quotes: 'These people are not simply fans, they're more like members of one extended family'.

Aspas has been interacting with the online LFC contingent via Twitter. Some people are in favour of the social networking site, others can't stand it. The player can see both points of view. "I can understand why some don't like it, but I am a fan. I use it a lot because it's a great way to keep informed.

"If you're at a match and need to know other scores you can get them straightaway. It has transfer stories. It's almost like a newspaper. Also, it let's me speak to the Liverpool fans. Now I am part of their family too."

Introducing a comprehensive new database for Reds players past and present, plus LFC games from today and yesteryear

Liverpool Football Club now has access to a wealth of fascinating facts and figures about the club's players and matches via a new database.

The LFC Official Archives have been compiled by Norwegian statistician Jonny Stokkeland, who has devoted hour after hour to researching information about the Reds. Aside from his extensive records of Liverpool FC first-team fixtures, Jonny has attempted to find details relating to reserve and junior teams going right back to the club's foundation. "I make several trips to England each year and have a schedule for visiting various places to examine records," he tells the magazine.

"From the Football League Museum in Preston I have found all players registered with Liverpool from 1893 to 1992. I must have used around 30 days in there during the years.

"In 2012 I spent a week at the British Library's newspaper archive in Colindale, North London. Then last year I visited libraries in Birmingham, Stoke, Burnley, Blackburn, Blackpool, Accrington, Nelson, Preston, Huddersfield, Sheffield, Heywood, Rochdale and Darwen. I have also frequented the Central Library in Liverpool as well as Crosby and Birkenhead libraries, the Liverpool FA, Lancashire FA and Lancashire Record Office. Each trip usually produces some good results."


Jonny Stokkeland

One area where Jonny is particularly meticulous is player information. "We buy as many birth certificates as possible to ensure the information we have about players is 100% correct. It is an expensive way of doing things – we have spent around £2,000 – but it helps us know that our records are accurate.

"[My colleague] Sveinung Egeland has created a great PC program where all the information is stored and last year we signed a long-term contract with the club to make our collection the LFC Official Archives."

At the last count (January) the

ASK JONNY...

Jonny and his team aim to help ex-players or families of ex-players requesting information and are grateful when they receive new biographical details. If you have an LFC-related query about a player or particular game, you can contact Jonny via lfcmag@programmemaster.com.

A MATTER

The LFC class of 1905/06 and today's squad (right)

> "We buy birth certificates to ensure that the information about players is 100 per cent correct"



Liverpool in the 1965 FA Cup final

database included 4,750 players, directors and officials as well as 12,800 first-team, reserves and junior matches.

Jonny's hobby began when the Norwegian Supporters Club was formed in 1980. "I first visited Liverpool in 1992 and made contact with many of the old stars from just after the Second World War such as Albert Stubbins, Laurie Hughes, Phil Taylor and Bill Jones. I have more than 50 letters of correspondence and asked for information about them and their team-mates.

"At the same time I made contact with Eric Doig, another keen historian of Liverpool FC, and we have been friends since. Around five years ago we met George Rowlands, an expert on birth and death certificates. It was he who found the correct documents for William Barclay, an influential figure during the early days of LFC.

"Kjell Hanssen has also been helpful with his extensive collection of old newspapers and I should also mention Peter Raath in South Africa and Colin Jose in the USA, Gordon Small and Peter Holme in Preston as well as several people at the club over the years such as Stephen Done, Ian Sylvester, Danny Stanway and Phil Roscoe."

Can you help?

Jonny is trying to track down line-ups for the following reserve and youth fixtures:

Liverpool U-17s and U-19s v Tottenham 5 Sept 1998
Liverpool Reserves v Blackburn 18 May 1989
Liverpool Reserves v Huddersfield 9 April 1986
If you can help, please get in touch with lfcmag@programmemaster.com.

OF STATS


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The KOP

The bit at the back for Liverpool's legions of fans at home and all over the world…

LIVERPOOL V ARSENAL

Barclays Premier League Saturday 8 February

The Reds take on Arsene Wenger's men in a lunchtime kick-off that will test their top-four credentials. Brendan Rodgers' men will be aiming to avenge a 2-0 defeat at the Emirates in early November.

Liverpool last recorded a home league win over Arsenal in March 2007 when a Peter Crouch hat-trick helped them to a 4-1 triumph. The Reds also face the Gunners a week later in the fifth round of the FA Cup.

DON'T MISS ANY OF THE BUILD-UP ON LFC TV

The month

HORNETS TEST

Neil Critchley's youngsters (right) face a visit to Watford in the last 16 of the FA Youth Cup. The young Reds have beaten Blackpool and Aston Villa to reach this stage of the tournament and will face a tough test after the Hornets defeated holders Norwich City in the previous round.
No date had been set for the fixture at the time this magazine went to press but keep checking www.liverpoolfc.com for details.



YNWA – THE PLAY

Nicky Allt's play *YNWA The Official History Of Liverpool Football Club* is on at the city's Royal Court in March before moving to Dublin in April. The show, which tells the story of the club's 122-year history in 90 minutes, was a hit when it was first staged two years ago and fans can book tickets for the second run from 7 March. To book tickets, please visit www.royalcourtliverpool.co.uk.



ahead

ANNIVERSARIES

3 years since Luis Suarez made his debut for Liverpool on 2 February
13 years since Jari Litmanen (right) scored his first LFC goal on 10 February
115 years since Alex Raisbeck scored his first Liverpool goal on 11 February
23 years since the 4-4 draw with Everton in the FA Cup on 20 February
27 years since John Aldridge made his LFC debut on February 21
36 years since Graeme Souness scored his first LFC goal on 25 February



BIRTHDAY XI

Mike Hooper 50 on	10 Feb
Phil Neal 63 on	20 Feb
Alec Lindsay 66 on	27 Feb
Mamadou Sakho 24 on	13 Feb
Tiago Ilori 21 on	26 Feb
Ronnie Moran 80 on	28 Feb
Steve McManaman 42 on	11 Feb
Sammy Lee 55 on	7 Feb
Nick Barmby 40 on	11 Feb
Kevin Keegan 63 on	14 Feb
Jari Litmanen 43 on	20 Feb



LFC TV Q&A WITH MARK BENSTEAD LFC TV PRESENTER



First game as a fan?
I was a little late getting to my first game, I think it was a 3-2 win over QPR at Anfield in 1993. One of the things I remember most from the trip was my dad wanting to leave early to beat the traffic. We ended up missing Jan Molby's decisive penalty! I've never left a game early since.

Favourite player growing up?
Initially John Barnes then Steve McManaman. I like wide players who can carry the ball at pace - they were very different players in a lot of ways but both could do that. Barnes' touch was incredible and I also have fond memories of him curling in the odd free-kick. McManaman had a tremendous engine after his years of cross-country running as a kid. His performance in the League Cup final against Bolton Wanderers was sensational.

First player you interviewed?
Kenny Dalglish was probably the first former Red I interviewed – many years ago – but funnily enough I ended up being the person who interviewed him when he made his return. The first current player I interviewed was Lucas during pre-season over in Norway.

How hard is it separating being a fan and doing your job?
It can be tough when we've had a bad result but you just need to be professional. Win, lose or draw I try to be relatively impartial and give credit to the opposition when it is due. The one thing about our fans is they know their football, and I think that helps. This was underlined to me after the defeat to Man City on Boxing Day. Every call to our Match Day Phone-In was full of praise for the performance, despite the result. Not all teams' fans would react that way and that helps when doing this job.

Assuming Istanbul is your favourite game, what's no2 on your list?
I think I'll opt for the semi in the same year against Chelsea. The mad scramble to get a ticket added to the excitement in some ways. It was the biggest game the club had in 20 years so when I realised I was going it was pretty special and that increased about 100 times when I arrived at Anfield. In all my years watching and covering football I've never heard anything quite like the noise inside the ground that night. I'm convinced the crowd played a part in Eidur Gudjohnsen's miss in added time. I have to admit I was one of those who stayed behind to dance around the Shankly statue afterwards.

Favourite away ground?
That's tough. I've spent years travelling to stadiums here, there and everywhere to cover other teams for my various employers, but never really had the time to watch Liverpool away all that often. I worked at St James' Park earlier in the season for our 2-2 draw with Newcastle and was impressed by the set-up there. The Stadium of Light in Lisbon is pretty special, while El Madrigal in Spain was different - packed into tight streets in the very small city of Villarreal, but hosting a huge Champions League game.

Star you were happiest to meet?
I'm not one for getting star-struck or being too excited to meet 'famous' people but I have to admit it was very surreal to end up interviewing the Hollywood actor Mike Myers at Anfield recently. He was a really nice bloke and passionate about being back at Anfield. His late dad was a Scouser and he was made up to be able to watch Liverpool in person. He got quite emotional about it all in fact and I found it a bit weird that I'd almost made Dr Evil cry!

Favourite opposition player?
Dennis Bergkamp. I don't think he gets the credit he should for either how good he was or the impact he had on English football. In terms of current players lining up against the Reds, it probably has to be Yaya Toure, the complete midfielder.

Funniest moment at work?
In one of my previous roles I was dragged out of the aforementioned Stadium of Light in Lisbon during the middle of reading a live sports bulletin. I also almost got locked in the Darius and Girenas Stadium in Lithuania - all the lights went off and I had to shout to get the janitor to let me out. He was halfway down the street on his bike on the way to the pub when I finally managed to catch his attention! I also almost got left behind in France covering a match in Nancy. The bus left without me and two photographers. We hired a taxi and pretty much said: follow that bus!

Anyone you'd still like to interview?
Xabi Alonso. It would be great to speak to him about his time at Liverpool but also about how the move to Anfield developed him as a player. He might have the odd story about Real Madrid that might be worth a listen too! I'd also like to interview Igor Biscan – I'd want to know what he made of his almost cult hero status at Anfield.





CALLING SEASON-TICKET HOLDERS...

Many of the Reds' Barclays Premier League clashes at Anfield are sell outs – but if you can't attend the game, we have a suggestion for season-ticket holders. If there's some reason you cannot make it to Anfield, why not return your season-ticket seat using our **Buyback service** and receive credit against the cost of your season ticket next season if your seat is re-sold to another official LFC member? Visit **www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets/ticket-exchange** or call **0843 170 5555** to return your seat.





HAPPY BIRTHDAY RONNIE MORAN

Bootroom legend Ronnie Moran turns 80 later this month and LFC TV will be commemorating this milestone occasion with a special documentary about the man who served Liverpool in every capacity during an illustrious 49-year association with the club.

Bugsy Moran – A Tribute To Liverpool's Sergeant Major charts Moran's career from start to finish and features exclusive interviews with not only the man himself but also a star-studded cast of those whose lives he touched.

He was just 15 when he began playing C-team football for the Reds and the exemplary attitude he showed then stayed with him throughout his time here. A sturdy and reliable full-back, Moran spent the majority of his playing career in the Second Division but he won a First Division Championship medal in 1964 and went on to achieve even greater recognition as a loyal inhabitant of the Bootroom.

Starting out with the reserves, it wasn't long before he was moved up to work with the first team, of whom he twice took control on a brief caretaker basis. A renowned stickler for discipline, he worked the players hard on the training pitch but at the same time commanded their utmost respect and was a massive influence on the careers of so many. Whether it be as captain, coach or caretaker manager, the best interests of LFC were all that ever mattered to him and Liverpool FC was a much better place for it.

Don't miss the airing of *Bugsy Moran – A Tribute To Liverpool's Sergeant Major* on Friday 28 February at 7.30pm (repeated at 11pm).

For just £2.99 LFC TV Online allows you to watch LFC TV live and will give you on-demand access to all the team's goals, highlights, live reserve and under-18 games, news and exclusive video interviews. For more information please visit www.liverpoolfc.com/video.

Delayed coverage of every game will also be available on LFC TV which is free to view on Sky channel 429 or Virgin channel 544. For full listings visit www.liverpoolfc.com.





FIXTURES 13/14

AUGUST

17 Stoke City (H)	1-0
24 Aston Villa (A)	1-0
27 Notts County (H) (COC 2)	4-2

SEPTEMBER

1 Manchester Utd (H)	1-0
16 Swansea City (A)	2-2
21 Southampton (H)	0-1
25 Manchester Utd (A) (COC 3)	0-1
29 Sunderland (A)	3-1

OCTOBER

5 Crystal Palace (H)	3-1
19 Newcastle Utd (A)	2-2
26 West Brom (H)	4-1

NOVEMBER

2 Arsenal (A)	0-2
9 Fulham (H)	4-0
23 Everton (A)	3-3

DECEMBER

1 Hull City (A)	1-3
4 Norwich City (H)	5-1
7 West Ham Utd (H)	4-1
15 Tottenham H (A)	5-0
21 Cardiff City (H)	3-1
26 Manchester City (A)	1-2
29 Chelsea (A)	1-2

JANUARY 2013

1 Hull City (H)	2-0
5 Oldham (FAC 3) (H)	2-0
12 Stoke City (A)	5-3
18 Aston Villa (H)	2-2
25 Bournemouth (FAC 4) (A)	2-0
28 Everton (H)	4-0

FEBRUARY

2 West Brom (A) 1:30pm
8 Arsenal (H) 12:45pm
12 Fulham (A) 8:00pm
15/16 Arsenal (FAC 5) (A) TBC
23 Swansea City (H) 1:30pm

MARCH

1 Southampton (A) 5:30pm
10 Sunderland (H) 8:00pm
16 Manchester Utd (A) 1:30pm
22 Cardiff City (A)
30 Tottenham H (H) 4:00pm

APRIL

5 West Ham Utd (A)
12 Manchester City (H)
19 Norwich City (A)
26 Chelsea (H)

MAY

3 Crystal Palace (A)
11 Newcastle Utd (H)

All kick off times are BST. All Barclays Premier League fixtures are subject to change for the requirements of television and/or for other reasons such as police requests.
FA Premier League fixtures reproduced under licence from Football DataCo Limited.

Please check **www.liverpoolfc.com** for the latest details as and when they happen.

Away days

With a trip to Fulham coming on 12 February one Red recalls past matches at the Cottage

"There are not many grounds around with the sense of history that Craven Cottage has," says London-based Liverpool fan Jim Mason. "The small house in the corner gives it something different and it would be a pity if that was ever demolished.

"In my student days I lived on Fulham Road. We once went to watch Fulham play a Third Division game and sat in with the home fans. It was great to be in the really old fashioned part of the ground and made us appreciate what a unique stadium it is."

Usually, Jim's view of the action in SW6 is from the away end when the Reds are the visitors to the capital. "I go to our games here as much as possible," says the 53-year-old who was born in Liverpool but moved to South London with his family when he was young. "I think I went to Spurs for four or five years in a row when we hardly won – then I couldn't make it this season and we won 5-0. I'll stay away every time if it helps to secure a result like that.

"I've also been to Stamford Bridge and Upton Park on plenty of occasions. But Craven Cottage is definitely my favourite club ground in London. My daughters, Bernadette and Stephanie – who are also LFC supporters – love it too. We've been going there for years."



Reds keeper Cyril Sidlow in a 1949 game at the Cottage

Craven Cottage



Mason's childhood passion for the Reds was nurtured by train journeys to Merseyside at a young age. "There was a group of us at my school in London who all supported Liverpool. We pretended we were staying around at each other's house. Instead we'd leave school early and get the train up north to meet my cousin. Then we'd go to the game at Anfield that evening.

"We stood on the Spion Kop in these purple-grey-and-black school uniforms that nobody in Liverpool would have recognised. The other fans must have been wondering where the hell we were from.

"When the game – they were usually European fixtures – was over we'd jump on the train back to London. It would arrive in to Euston around 6am and from there we'd go to school. They were brilliant trips."

Nowadays, travelling to see LFC in action is a lot less complicated, particularly at Fulham. "It's a great day-out, especially if it's during the warmer months of April, May or August. There are some decent pubs nearby such as The Duke's Head across the river near Putney Bridge tube station, or The Blue Anchor near Hammersmith Bridge.

> **"It's a great ground and good day-out for the fans"**

"Then there is the walk to the ground which takes you through a park by a river. Right in the middle of the park is a burger stand. The cheeseburgers there are superb – I'd recommend them to everyone!

"The fact that we always get the entire away end of the ground really adds to the atmosphere. You have a good mix of supporters – those who go away regularly and those who are attending a Liverpool game for the very first time."

Jim's favourite Fulham-Liverpool game was on Saturday 4 April 2009. It was a 5:30pm kick-off and the second-placed Reds knew a win would see them leapfrog


Fulham v Liverpool
8.00pm Wednesday 12.02.14
Fulham F.C.



Yossi celebrates his late winner at the Cottage in 2009

Manchester United and move to the top of the table. "The weather was great and we played well. The problem was we kept hitting the woodwork. I remember Andrea Dossena, Xabi Alonso and Fernando Torres all going so close to scoring. The ball just wouldn't go in. Then in the 92nd minute Yossi Benayoun popped up to get the winner. He'd only been on for about 15 minutes.

"When the ball hit the net it was mayhem in the away end. All of the worry that had built up while watching so many near misses was instantly released. I know we didn't end up as champions, but the day and the manner of the victory was similar to the league title success at Wolves in 1976. It was a great night and something I'll always remember."

Just over two years after Yossi's

> **"When the ball hit the net it was mayhem in the away end"**

sensational goal, Jim was again enjoying a Liverpool victory at Craven Cottage. "The game at Fulham under Kenny Dalglish in 2011 didn't mean as much because we weren't in the title race. But it had a joyful atmosphere around it in terms of the weather and the football we played. It must have been one of our best performances during Kenny's second reign.

"I'm not a big fan of Steve Claridge as a pundit. But he was eulogising about our performance on Radio 5 Live a few nights later. For once I had to agree with him because to come away from there with a 5-2 win was superb."

If Jim was lucky enough to attend those fine victories over the Cottagers, fate wasn't on his side when the Reds journeyed to that part of London for a League Cup tie in September 1993.

Graeme Souness used the occasion to give 18-year-old Robbie Fowler his first taste of senior action. Of course the teenager didn't disappoint, netting our third goal in a comfortable 3-1 win. Famously, in the second leg 13 days later Fowler was the sole name on the score-sheet in a 5-0 win at Anfield.

"People obviously remember the game with his five goals," Mason says. "But it was in the first match where 'the second coming' actually began and I missed it. I had been due to go along with a mate until it absolutely bucketed it down and I couldn't get there. I remember there was a photo of a taxi in Battersea with rainwater up to its windows in the paper the next day. Thankfully I did get to see Robbie score on many more occasions."

CLASSIC CLASH

25.2.67 First division
Fulham 2 Liverpool 2

Despite the fact that the teams would eventually finish season 1966/67 separated by 13 places – Liverpool in fifth and Fulham 18th – there was nothing between them when they went head to head. Both league games finished 2-2, the Anfield meeting taking place in October with Geoff Strong and Ian St John netting for Bill Shankly's defending champions. The same pair also found the net at Craven Cottage. But a Les Barrett effort and an own-goal by Ron Yeats ensured the spoils were divided. Drawing meant Liverpool were level on points with leaders Manchester United, behind them on goal average. However, just three victories from their last dozen outings meant the title wasn't retained.

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Mamadou with pupils from All Saints

Vive la Foundation!


High five!

Liverpool FC Foundation's Football and Sports Development Programme provides young people with the opportunity, whatever their ability, to develop and learn to play 'The Liverpool Way' through a range of engaging initiatives.

On The Ball is one of them, developing confidence, teamwork, fitness and understanding of the game through weekly football sessions delivered by Foundation community coaches in schools in Liverpool – and just recently Mamadou Sakho made a return visit to All Saints Primary School in Anfield to continue his support work.

As part of his new ambassadorial role with Liverpool FC Foundation, the centre-back assists in both coaching sessions and helping pupils with the speaking and reading elements of their French language studies. "Being able to give something back to the



The pupils loved having the LFC ace pay another visit

"Being able to give something back is very important to me"

local community via the Liverpool FC Foundation is really important to me," he says. "I am passionate about sharing my skills and knowledge with young people and helping them to develop and gain as many opportunities in life as possible."

Mark Haig, Liverpool FC Foundation's head of operations, adds: "Mamadou is a fantastic ambassador and his enthusiasm really shines through. His ongoing input will have a positive impact on the pupils."

SWAZILAND SURPRISE



Children from the academy in their kits

Liverpool FC Foundation has donated unused kit from previous seasons to Bulembu Academy in Swaziland. Based in a former mining town in the northwest of the country, the academy is attended by more than 300 children and has its own league for students and workers. The mine in Bulembu closed in 2001, leaving no jobs and the town abandoned.
Emma Patterson, associate of the academy, says: "This fantastic donation from LFC has enlightened the lives of some of the orphans here whose love for football gives them great joy and hope." Forbes Duff, international programme lead at Liverpool FC Foundation, adds: "The donation of kit and equipment is part of our tradition and reinforces our ongoing commitment to support charities at home and abroad."
Kit donations have been a cornerstone of the Foundation's work for more than 20 years. Kit Aid, Liverpool Homeless Football Club, Oxfam, Whizz Kids United, Friends of the Malawi Orphans and organisations on Merseyside have been beneficiaries in the past.



Angela and Barry Carter with Forbes Duff from Liverpool FC Foundation

THE COUPLE WHO CARED

Liverpool FC Foundation has donated 20 adult shirts and 50 boys and girls shirts to a Gambian school and clinic with a Reds association.
Liverpool fans Angela and Barry Carter from Childwall built the LFC-themed venue in Gambia with their life savings after visiting the West African country on holiday and discovering that the village of Wullingkamma close to their resort had no school.
"A local resident told us that private landowners had knocked down the local school to reclaim the land, leaving the children without access to education," reveals Angela. Within a year of the couple planning the school's construction, it was in operation for 500 children.
The nearby clinic is due to open soon, providing anti-natal care for local women plus malaria treatment and care.
"I'm absolutely delighted with the donation by Liverpool FC Foundation," adds Angela.
"The residents of Wullingkamma absolutely love football and will be over the moon to receive these shirts. I can't wait to see the look on their faces."
If you can support the venture, please email Ang_Carter@hotmail.com.



With Samantha Armstrong, female fans representative on the LFC Supporters Committee

Tell us a bit about yourself Sam...

I have been following Liverpool as long as I can remember, although receiving a red-and-white scarf for my seventh birthday is always something that sticks in my mind – it made me feel like a proper supporter. My first game was a derby and Liverpool won, and I was lucky enough to see some of our most famous players in the 1970s and 80s.

I work as head of marketing at a local university and have one daughter. I played football for a few years at university but was never very good and preferred watching to playing. I was a football mum for about eight years when my daughter played a lot. We raised money and took her team to the USA for a week where they played and trained with American coaches. The facilities for girls football and sport in general in the US surpassed anything I've seen in the UK.

And your role with the Supporters Committee?

My role has been evolving. It covers everything from promoting the successes of the ladies team, to dealing with female supporter issues as well as a keen personal interest in raising aspirations in young girls. As part of my role I am also a member of two sub-committees – communications and equality – so there is always a meeting to attend and issues to discuss. And it's not just limited to the four meetings a year with the club by any means. Many issues raised by female fans overlap with other areas – season-ticket holders, LFC Memberships, away supporters – so I could be dealing with queries and questions about anything.



Nicole Rolser scores for the Ladies team



Sam by the Paisley Gates at Anfield

Can you give us a good example of the work that you do?

I continue to pursue a higher profile on the main LFC website for the Ladies team and have some ideas about how the club can celebrate International Women's Day this year. Some of the best things I've been able to do are probably the smaller, more personal things. Being able to put people in touch with the charity department to secure items of merchandise to help them raise funds for good causes is particularly gratifying.

What's it like now for female fans to attend football matches?

Things were a bit more rough-and-ready in the 80s, especially at away games, and thankfully facilities have generally improved for female fans.

How has the FA WSL changed things?

The women's game in the UK has been growing steadily but grassroots football continues to need all the support it can get, for male and female participants. We are a long way behind the USA in terms of facilities for what are the future generation of footballers.

Liverpool Ladies winning the Women's Super League last year was a fantastic achievement and the subsequent honours at the FA Women's Awards were testament to a great season. Champions League next for them and hopefully a run of titles.

What are your ambitions?

In terms of the committee, I hope I've worked with colleagues to build a solid foundation through which supporters can engage with the club. There were a lot of processes and policies to develop during the first few years, but now these are in place I hope committee members feel empowered to work with fans and fan groups and the club to improve the supporter experience.

Personally I'll continue with my interests in raising aspirations among young girls. There are opportunities out there for them to become not just players but also key members of the male-dominated game as, for example, physios, referees or lines-people and maybe one day as an EPL manager.

For more info please email: female-supporters@liverpoolfcsc.com

A FITTING TRIBUTE

The tragedies of Hillsborough and Ibrox are remembered in a new fundraising single

With the 25th anniversary of Hillsborough approaching, a new single has been released to raise funds for both the Hillsborough Family Support Group and the New Ibrox Permanent Memorial Fund.

Entitled *Absent Friends*, it's the brainchild of John McGivern, secretary of the Hillsborough Ibrox Memorial Group. He explains: "We are always looking for ways to make money for both groups. I had the idea of making a charity CD to support them and I thought this song would be perfect.

"I approached [singer-songwriter] Lee Roy James about this at the Hillsborough Service and he said he'd be delighted to help, so we put out a plea to see if we could get a Rangers singer. Jim Holmes, a Scot based in Ormskirk said he'd love to, and both of them gave us their services at no cost.

"My friend John Gunning said he'd help produce the CD. I went to Knotty Ash Community Centre where John Bligh gave us use of the recording studio and. Another friend, Paul Walters, did all the artwork for us."

The HIMG aims to assist the Hillsborough Family Support Group in their fight for justice by providing financial support. It seeks to engage with existing groups connected with the Ibrox Disaster to ensure that fitting memorials are in place to those that lost their lives. It also aims to provide information to the wider public about both disasters, thus helping to ensure that those who lost their lives continue to be remembered.

Absent Friends is available now at **www.himg.co.uk/store**.

















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WISH LIST

Steven, Luis, Jordon, Aly, Raheem, Victor and Mamadou showcase Liverpool FC's new **Warrior Melwood Collection**. The range in its entirety can be viewed and purchased online at **www.liverpoolfc.com/store** and any Official LFC Club Store

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1 & 5 LFC Mens Red Warrior Melwood Dread Track Top £50
Tap into the LFC-Warrior brand's new cool with this track top's simple yet well appointed detailing – as modelled by Steven and Raheem. (TM367R)

2 LFC Mens Warrior Melwood Mortal Harrington Jacket £60
A classic piece that takes the traditional Harrington up a notch – in black with red embroidered Liverbird and Warrior logo. (WSJM375)

3 LFC Mens Melwood Assassin Hoody £50
Technical expertise meets street cool with this hoody that's got matchday covered. (TM368R)

4 LFC Mens Melwood Warrior Slayer Bomber Jacket £60
Give your LFC collection a hit of contemporary style with this dark-grey bomber with subtle detailing that instantly feels like an old favourite. (WSJM374)

6 LFC Mens Red Warrior Melwood Dante Stripe Polo £40
Shake up your polo game with this assured style choice that ticks the boxes – with gold embroidered Liverbird and black Warrior print. (TM370R)

7 LFC Mens Melwood Arachnid Tee £25
Stand out with this awesome tee featuring Warrior Unleash Hell design and Liverbird print. (TM373R)

All featured products are available in official club stores and online at **www.liverpoolfc.com/store**


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Liverpool Ladies captain

Gemma Bonner on Instagram





16 December
After party pics #shearer #lineker #hansen #savage #dublin



16 December
#SPOTY awards last night with the teamies



15 December
Looking forward to the #SPOTY tonight



13 December
Me & Jordan listening to Rio our mentor! #JAS #inspire



10 December
Few pics from todays @FAWSL photoshoot! #smilee



19 November
Another few pics from the catalogue #posing #liverpool



6 November
At the Linda McCartney Centre today with the WSL Trophy #SupportBreastCancer



5 November
Enjoyed a good chat with Jamie Carragher last night! #oneclub #liverpool



14 October
Found this pic of me in my first football shirt. Little did I know I'd be playing for them when I was older!



6 October
Lifting the trophy in front of the KOP



6 October
Fun at the family park before the game @beckyeaston16 @fara44 @sophiaric28



30 September
Won't be forgetting this moment anytime soon!!



David PRICE

Arsenal double-header will be key to Reds hopes

We have some big games to look forward to between now and the end of the season starting with the two meetings with Arsenal this month.

Those games could have a big impact on our season but, for me, the league game is by far the most important as it's vital that we finish in that top four. If you offered me Champions League football next season over winning the FA Cup in this one, I would take it.

Missing out on Champions League but winning the FA Cup would be like being stuck between a rock and a hard place. The rewards for getting back into the Champions League are significant but the other aspect is the Europa League which I can't help thinking is a complete waste of time in its current format.

I would probably think differently if it was a straight knockout tournament but at the moment it means umpteen group games, travelling to remote places in eastern Europe and having league games put back to Sundays. It almost puts you off wanting to win the FA Cup!

The league has always been our bread and butter and you always want to finish as high as possible.

There was a time I remember when Arsenal hated coming to Anfield as we used to beat them season after season. But of course they are a strong team now and capable of getting results anywhere.

Having said that I thought we were unlucky at the Emirates in November.

"If you offered me Champions League football over the FA Cup I'd take it"



Action from the Emirates earlier this season

We had a good go and there was not much between the two sides so we have every reason to be positive and it will be easier at Anfield than it was in North London.

This season has been unlike previous campaigns where we've struggled against lesser teams but been able to get results against the bigger teams. This year, with the exception of Tottenham, we've struggled to get a result against the other big sides but been consistent against the lower-placed teams. One factor in that has been the fixture list and sending us to Chelsea and Manchester City within the space of four days during the busy Christmas period was a nightmare. If those two games hadn't come back to back when they did we may still be second going into February.

Home form has been much improved and had we beaten Aston Villa last month it would have made it eight consecutive home league wins.

Therefore no team will fancy coming up here and, as well as Arsenal, we've still got Chelsea, Manchester City and Tottenham to play at Anfield yet.

I'd be pleased with seven points from those games - two wins and a draw. That would bode well because we'd also be taking points off those other sides in the process.

Beating Arsenal here would be a good start and set us up nicely for that cup game the following week.

I made a winning start to 2014 with a first round knockout against Istvan Ruzsinszky in Stuttgart last month.

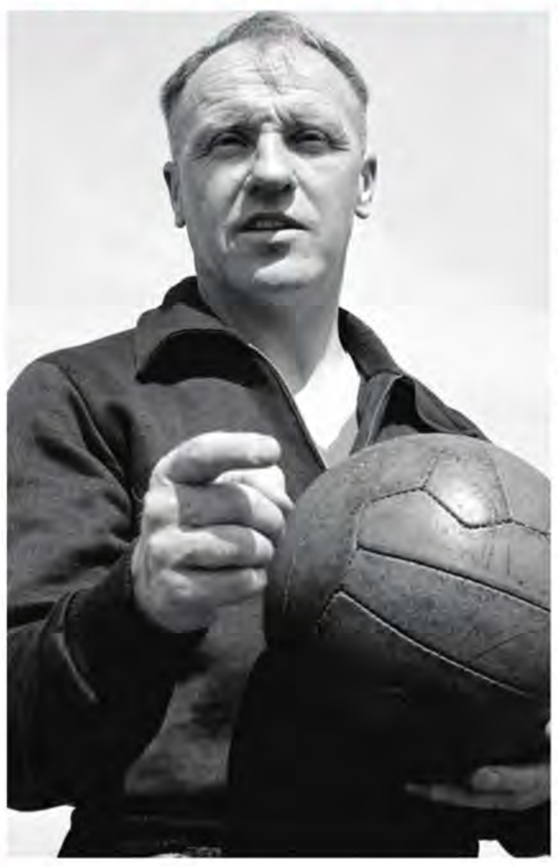
The fight was over quickly but, as I've always said, you don't get paid overtime the more rounds it takes.

My last memory of being in a boxing ring now is of getting my hand raised at the end of the contest rather than the referee waving the fight off in front of me. That's an obstacle I've overcome and I'm now looking forward to another fight in Germany next month against a stronger opponent.

Mentally, I'm in a much better place now. My new trainer Tommy Brooks is going to bring a lot to the table especially in the bigger fights down the line. However; the main thing is I'm enjoying being a fighter again.

Follow David on Twitter @DavidPrice_1

WHAT IF... BILL SHANKLY HAD BECOME LIVERPOOL BOSS IN 1951?



It's the summer of 1956 and Liverpool fans are dancing for joy in the streets of Paris. Hours earlier they'd witnessed their brilliant young manager Bill Shankly mastermind a tactical triumph to defeat Spanish giants Real Madrid 4-3 and become the first winners of the European Cup.

The board, hitherto considered unambitious, had been repaid handsomely for their brave decision to appoint the 37-year-old Shankly in the spring of 1951. Their bold move to splash out a record £25,000 on striker Denis Law also paid dividends with the Scot having just taken his tally for the season to 40 with the hat-trick that thwarted Madrid. Thirty of his goals had come in firing the Reds to their second successive league title...

Okay okay – we know. But just imagine what might have happened had Shankly taken the helm eight-and-a-half years earlier than he did. In 1951 he'd been interviewed for the vacant post of Liverpool manager after George Kay had stepped down for health reasons. But he wouldn't compromise his beliefs on team selection and the scrutiny of club directors. In the end the board chose Brighton manager Don Welsh, who'd been a prolific goalscorer for Liverpool as a wartime guest.

Sadly George took over a stagnating side and even Billy Liddell couldn't halt the slide. Liverpool finished bottom in 1953/54 and would stay in the Second Division until 1962, Shankly's second full season at the helm. In the great man's own words: "I was young and fit and ambitious. Liverpool were in the First Division. They were struggling, but there were a lot of young players knocking about the game. I could have started the job eight years earlier than I did! God Almighty, what I would have done for Liverpool then."

The European Cup was born in 1956 but barely two months before Real Madrid were lifting that inaugural trophy in the French capital, Liverpool were ending their Second Division season with a 2-0 defeat to Lincoln City at Sincil Bank.


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